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Chorley





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# SKETCHES

OF

## A SEA-PORT TOWN.

BY HENRY F. CHORLEY.

"Thou lovest the woods, the rocks, the quiet fields,  
But tell me, if thou canst, enthusiast wan,  
Why the broad town to thee no gladness yields?—  
If thou lov'st nature, sympathise with man—  
For he and his are parts of nature's plan."  
*The Author of Corn Law Rhymes.*

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

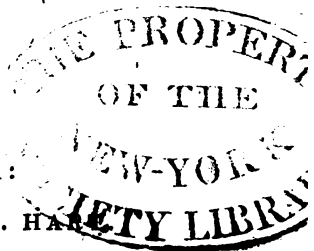
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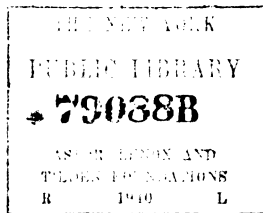
PHILADELPHIA :

E. L. CAREY & A. HARRIS

1836.

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TO JOHN RUTTER, ESQ. M. D.

MY DEAR UNCLE,

THIS is not precisely the book which I should like to have dedicated to you ; but it is my first, and I can offer it to no one with so much propriety or pleasure, as to the person whom I have such good cause to regard as my second *father*. I inscribe it to you, therefore, as a mark of the *grateful* regard of

Your affectionate nephew,

HENRY F. CHORLEY.





## P R E F A C E.

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A book like the following might, and *should* have been presented to the public without the ceremony (like most other ceremonies, wearisome) of a preface, did I not feel it almost incumbent upon me to say a few words: they shall, however, be as few as possible.

In the first place, some may imagine that I have drawn the personages who figure in my sketches from real individuals. To such I would simply state the fact that these volumes were written in the expectation of their being published, with my name as their author, while I was yet residing in the place, among the inhabitants of which alone I could be suspected of having found my originals. I hope that this assertion is sufficient to satisfy any one that such *could not* have been my purpose. Secondly, some may consider that I have used a certain personal pronoun overmuch. I must beg of them to believe that I have no more written in my own individual person than I have made free with the characters of my neighbours;—to bear in mind that the style of description which has been attempted, offers temptation, more than any other, for an author to

invest himself with a fictitious nature, and to give utterance to, and work out the fancies belonging to the character he has assumed. This has not been done without the example of many whose names it would be thought a presumption to associate with my own: but I trust, like them, to be allowed the full benefit of the privilege.

LONDON, June 1st, 1834.

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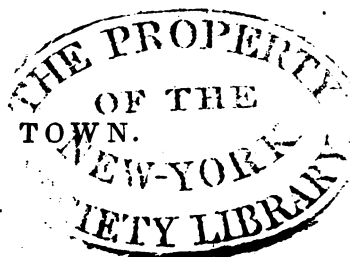




# SKETCHES

OF

A SEA PORT TOWN.



THE STREETS, No. 1.

## CHARACTERS.

THERE is pleasure for the eye everywhere, if it have once learned the wholesome lesson of condescending to objects in detail, as well as comprehending them in the gross. Even whilst travelling along the flattest turnpike road, on the noon of a dusty breathless July day, you may often be refreshed by catching a peep of some small fresh garden full of bay trees and roses. It is in the barrenest moorland districts that you meet those rich distances empurpled with heath, so impossible to be painted, but so delicious to be gazed upon. Has not Paul Potter composed fair landscapes from the canals and pollards of his own land, and Moreland painted absolute romances of ruined sheds and farm-yards, which *cognoscenti* will tell you are beyond all price?—Well then, there is a beauty everywhere,—ay—even in the bird's eye view of our Sea Port Town.

Yes; though the one whereof I treat boasts hardly one vestige of antiquity; though its streets are so much alike as to be a cause of considerable bewilderment to country strangers;—I do maintain, that, seen from the landward, it has its attractions

as a landscape, even if we cast out of the account the noble river emptying its waters into the sea, which forms such a prominent feature in the back ground. I have stood on the top of the hill beneath which it is built, and looked with pleasure at its prospects of roofs and chimneys. Come and stand beside me, ye who are skeptical—take the clusters of buildings of unequal height in place of clumps of trees,—the perspective openings of streets for glades,—the domes of churches, etc., for hills:—give to these the advantage of the many shades of colour wherewith Time knows how to beautify even brick walls and slate roofs;—remark the sunshine glistening upon distant windows—the passing shades of smoke,—for, start not,—there is beauty in the densest volume of that calumniated vapour, which ever coiled itself out of a manufactory chimney,—and you have formed a picture of some variety at least, I would boldly say, of some interest.

But my familiar friends the Streets have a farther value, as being the fields where unceasing amusement and food for thought may be gathered. To reap the full advantage of these, however, you must be a zealous pedestrian at all hours, and through all weathers:—you must cast in your lot among the market carts and schoolboys in the morning, as well as among the frock coats and feathers in the afternoon; you must waive dignity and walk to your *soirée* at night, and from it again at midnight: and if you have any power of observing what is around you, and any disposition to derive pleasure from the same, you will experience for yourselves the truth of a maxim, which I once heard a young lady deliver during a pause in conversation, when a large circle of listeners was waiting for the renewal of a tournament of words between two of the most eloquent talkers whom I ever heard discourse. “The town,” said she, in a tone of much composure and authority, “has its pleasures as well as the country, though they differ.”

In one respect the promenader of a provincial town has the advantage of him who goes forth to study character on the *pavé* of the metropolis. There cannot be the same separation of classes and callings here, as in a city where Nobility is ensconced in the court quarter, and Trade buys and sells on the Stock Exchange, and Law takes counsel in his inns of court. Here you will in one moment encounter a group of *native* characters, (I concede the pre-eminence in brilliant exotics to Oxford Street and Piccadilly), as heterogeneous as the articles, which, in an old conundrum, one liquid (ink) is said to have the power of expressing. The knot of people before us is not unworthy of being studied. There is first the would-be *aristo-*

*crates* stepping from her carriage, and carefully refraining from looking around her, dressed in the richest of silks, and the most delicate of laces:—showing in striking contrast with the man who rudely brushes past her, regardless of her pretty displeasure at such a want of proper respect. He is Captain of one of those small traders which every fair wind brings into port in myriads; with a short, thick-set figure,—a tanned face, tarry hands,—boots with abundance of sea room in them, a rolling yet decided step:—the strongest contrast in the world to her of the dainty apparel, slim figure and *sans souci* carriage.

After him comes one of those itinerants, whose existence upon his trade seems nothing short of marvellous, acknowledged as a nuisance by every one, yet day after day to be seen with the same ragged coat, and brown hat, and slouching gait, and dull physiognomy, *dandering* lazily up and down, and scarcely seeming to have sense or volition enough to support his tray;—one half of which bears a flock of lambs fleeced with shreds of cotton wool, and mounted upon tin legs; and the other, a fierce array of cocks, as gay as combs of red duffel can make them. How different is such a melancholy figure from one of the wandering Savoyards, those bright-eyed, knavish, merry urchins, who, no less ragged, and no more encouraged than the natural history vender aforesaid, carry within them that principle of perpetual gladness which defies hunger, cold, and nakedness. It is next to impossible to speak harshly to one of those varlets, even should he beset you, as I have been beset by a child, scarcely twelve years old, who, on the strength of some penny of other days, was wont to keep up a constant clatter before me, from one end of a long street to the other, in the hope of again attracting my charitable notice. *Kicking* time with his clogs, to the horrible tunes he extorted from his *vielle*, he seemed to enjoy the noise and disturbance he made, and never disheartened by the stony disregardfulness with which I used to stalk along, he would persevere in his importunity, till we reached a certain corner, whence a variety of less-trodden thoroughfares diverged, where he always left me. I shall never forget the particular "*deil ma care*" sort of fling, with which he used to turn back to torment some other passenger,—in all probability with as little success. There is that in the nature of an Englishman, which will ever prevent his becoming a merry beggar. Our paupers are surly, or shrewd, or sheepish:—but they rarely if ever,—and Heaven forbid that they should learn it!—exhibit that reckless unconcern which seems to make a precarious out-of-doors life, so little of a trial to the



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# SKETCHES

OF

## A SEA-PORT TOWN.

BY HENRY F. CHORLEY.

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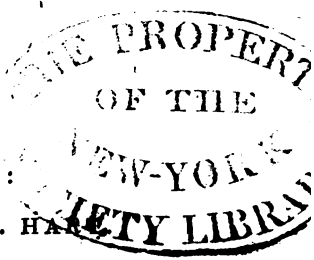
VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA :

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We stirred the fire and arranged ourselves anew to listen.

"It is about fifteen years ago," she began, "that Captain Barkholme, a cousin of my husband's, disagreed so violently with his son, that George was compelled to leave home, for peace's sake. Some wondered at this, because, though the old man was very unreasonable and fierce-tempered, and, as some said, half-crazed with spirit drinking, and though he had always behaved unjustly and tyrannically towards his children, George had always submitted to his authority with the utmost gentleness. I was not surprised, for I knew the cause of their quarrel. George had privately engaged to marry a young girl, and when their compact was discovered, the old captain broke out into such an outrageous passion, and swore such awful oaths, as have never been heard before or since. He was that sort of man, whom nothing or nobody would please when he was in certain humours, and made no scruple of abusing his daughters in the most shameful manner, when George was at sea,—for the young man, with all his sweetness of temper, had the spirit of a lion, and would not have allowed any one so much as to look angrily upon his sisters, had he known it. I never could hear what was Captain Barkholme's objection to the poor girl :—she was an orphan, the daughter of a sort of country squire, who had once owned a small estate near Malpas. But times were bad ; and her father had lived beyond his income, so that, at his death, his property was sold to pay his debts, and his daughter was glad to take a governess' situation. At the time when George became acquainted with her, she was in Mr. Wells' family. Mr. Wells was the owner of George's ship,—and he approved of the attachment, and promised to do something for the young couple ; but the old man, as I said, became frantic when he found it out, perhaps he wished his son to marry elsewhere. However, he made George's home so uncomfortable that he left it,—to come back no more.

"The poor girl, who was the cause of all this rage, was so terrified by Captain Barkholme's threatening and intemperate language, that she might almost have been persuaded to take any step, if her lover had not been at her side. George's only remaining sister who lived at home, the others being comfortably married, became likewise the victim of her father's passion on this account. The old man was never a very sound sleeper, and after his son's departure, he would get up in the middle of the night, and wander up and down the house, with a candle in one hand, and a bottle of spirits in the other, swearing most horribly, and muttering about wicked things which he had done when he was off the Gold coast ;—his old messmates *did* whie-

per something about his having flogged a poor black cabin boy to death. However this might be, he never lay down, without a light at his bedside ;—and so violent became his threats, that, at last, George determined upon being married before he left port, in the hope that when the step was irrevocably taken, his father would moderate his anger, which could then answer no possible purpose.

“I had known Mary Anne Parnell’s mother well, and was as fond of her as if she had been my own daughter ; besides, she was so humble and patient that it was impossible to help loving her. She would often come to me in the evening to talk to me and ask my counsel ; and truly, it was a difficult thing to know what to advise, when one of the parties seemed to be so entirely possessed by an evil spirit.—It was on a beautiful October evening, I remember it well,—that she came to me much later than usual ; I had not called for candles, I love twilight so much,—and was sitting over the fire alone. There was light enough, however, to show her tears, and I felt her tremble so violently, that I was compelled to put my arm round her waist, and hold her upon her chair. I took off her bonnet, and soothed her as well as I could, but it was some minutes before she could collect herself sufficiently to speak ; at length, she gasped out,—‘O mamma!’—(for she always called me mamma) ‘I am going to be married to-morrow!’”

“‘To-morrow, my love!—what is the occasion of all this haste?’”

“‘Some sudden business—but I scarcely understand—my head runs round so—the Royal Elizabeth is to go to sea early on Saturday morning, and George will hear of nothing else—and to-morrow Friday too!’—and at this she began to weep. When I prevailed upon her to dry her tears again, she told me farther that Captain Barkholme had broken in upon them, scarce an hour before, and declared that he would appear at whatever church they went to, and forbid the ceremony’s taking place—‘and then the shocking words which he said about *me*,’ continued the agitated girl,—‘the old man cursed so horribly ; and George grew very angry—and—I can hardly bear to tell you, they came to blows, though I am sure that George only defended himself as quietly as he could.’”

“‘And where is George now?’ asked I.

“‘Gone for a license ; and he says that we are to be married the first thing in the morning—quite early—that his father may not find it out : and that he will explain it to the clergyman—but I feel so terrified—every thing seems against us!’”

“‘Poor Mary Anne!—she was indeed so thoroughly nervous,

that I resolved to keep her with me all night.—She slept with me, or rather we lay down together, for we neither of us slept, though we did not speak. I shall never forget the sadness of heart which came over me, as I felt her tears falling upon my shoulder ;—she was of an extremely timid spirit, poor girl ! and had always believed herself to be born to misfortunes. Some fortuneteller or other had told her so when she was a child.

“Morning, however, came at last, and we were so much hurried that we had no time to remember our forebodings. Besides, the sun rose cheerily, and when once the night is gone, it is wonderful how all its troubles are forgotten, however heavy they may have been. George came to attend us to church ; he was in high spirits, and a handsomer young man I would not wish to see. This sudden voyage, it seemed, had been planned in consequence of some private information which Wells and Co. had received, and the Royal Elizabeth was to be despatched to Charleston with the least possible delay. The wedding was to take place at St. James', as, being the church most out of the way. I own, I shuddered as we went thither, at the thoughts of some disgraceful scene taking place before the altar, and there was time to be afraid, for we had nearly a quarter of an hour's drive from the extreme other end of the town ; but the lovers did not partake of my apprehension—Mr. Wells, who had been up all night writing letters to go by the vessel, had kindly undertaken to meet us at church, and to give the bride away.

“We had to pass through a street at the corner of which is a church, frequented by Captain Barkholme's family. Will you believe it ?—he was there, sitting upon the steps of the chancel door, with a thick stick in his hand, and a few children standing round him, and staring at him. I saw this at a first glance, for I dared not venture a second lest he should see me, —and I was miserable lest either of my companions should chance to look out, and be shocked by so strange a sight, for he was, even then, completely intoxicated. Fortunately, however, they did not, and we accomplished our drive without any hindrance or interruption.

“Mr. Wells, and the clergyman, and the clerk were all there before us. The last was a little pale paralytic man,—with a large baldish head, and half his face oddly drawn up towards his left eye, who walked with difficulty, and spoke in the most squeaking and dry voice I ever heard. I think I see him before me, though we only met twice—so deep an impression did all these things make upon me. The service passed over as usual—the certificate was signed in due order. The bridegroom

seemed quite beside himself with joy. 'What are you stooping for?' said I—'I have dropped my wedding ring,' said he; 'And on Friday too;'—croaked out the ugly clerk. 'We will soon find it,' said George gaily—I could not force a smile, as I stooped to assist in the search:—without success however. The ring had rolled away into some corner or other, and, in short, was no where to be found.

"Ah! I see you think me a fanciful old woman!—but how could any one expect such an unlucky wedding to prosper?—Mr. Wells had invited us to his house, to breakfast, and directed the coachman thither. We were riding on, I pondering on what had passed, when our carriage suddenly stopped. Mr. Wells looked out of the window to inquire the cause of our delay—when he drew in his head again, his face was as white as a sheet: 'Sit still, ladies, for God's sake,' said he, 'and do not look out!'—and putting out his hand, opened the coach-door and alighted—George after him. I *could* not sit still, and when I looked out, the rumour in the crowd, of a man killed, reached my ear, at the same moment that the most frightful spectacle I ever saw, met my eye:—and gracious Providence!—the dead man was Captain Barkholme!

"A scream, which I could not repress, burst from me,—and at once a crowd of curious passers-by crowded around the coach, with details of the accident fresh upon their lips. The wretched man, entirely stupefied with spirits, had left his position on the church-door steps, I suppose with some vague idea of seeking out his son, and, whilst crossing the street had been run over by a break, in which a gentleman's groom was exercising a pair of spirited young horses. The man had called to him in vain,—the devoted creature tottered directly into the midst of their path, was knocked down, and the wheels went over his head!—

"You may imagine the confusion and horror which this awful dispensation created: and how this was heightened by news from the office, which was brought to us at Mr. Wells' house, whither Mary Anne, almost in a fainting state was carried. This was, that by great exertion, the Royal Elizabeth had been cleared out, and was now ready for sea, and, as the wind was fair, it was decided that she should sail by that afternoon's tide. The poor wife who had never seen her husband since he had parted from her in the coach, to accompany his father's mangled remains home, was thrown into agonies by this cruel message: and close upon it followed a note from George himself, entreating her, if possible, to come down to the pier head, that he might see her once more before he sailed—if only for a

minute. So rapidly had time gone over in the confusion and distress occasioned by Captain Barkholme's awful death, that the day was already far advanced, and this the only chance of the new married couple's meeting. Mary Anne would go—at once. We called for a hackney coach,—but none was to be had,—so we set off to walk. It was a long distance, and how we got over it I do not know, for poor Mary Anne was in such a state that I expected she would fall down in the street at every step she took.

“At last, however, we did come within sight of the pier-head. It was crowded with people, and from the spot which we had reached, we could see above their heads huge piles of white canvas moving rapidly alongside the shore, as the large ships which had got clear of the dock basin were standing out into the middle of the river, which was studded with crafts of all sizes, till then detained by contrary winds. I dragged Mary Anne along as well as I could;—and, in a few moments we were at the top of the slip, in the midst of passengers, porters, sailors' wives, come on the same errand as ourselves. We arrived just, and only just in time. George, who had delayed to the last minute, was standing with one foot on the gunwale of a boat. The stairs were so crowded that to attempt to reach him was impossible to two weak women,—one of them too, in such a condition. But, thank Providence! he looked up and saw us! and *such* a manly, affectionate, yet grave look he gave, as he kissed his hand to her, before the boat pushed off. I shall never forget! We followed him with our eyes to the side of the Royal Elizabeth—for she was then only about five hundred yards from the pier-head. We could distinguish his figure from the crew and passengers on deck, as he waived his hat to us,—and while Mary Anne stood there gazing after him, with all her heart in her eyes, the gallant ship with all her sails set, glided from before us, like a heap of snow floating down a brook. Before long she began to melt into the heavy fog which lay upon the surface of the water:—but we watched her, till the eye strained to its utmost, could not separate her, even as a speck, from the grey veil which hung upon the river,—and then,—we sorrowfully turned homewards.

“You may suppose that to comfort Mary Anne was no easy task. She would shiver and turn pale, if a breath of air waved the withered mignonette in the box on the window sill. She would go down to the river side, the first thing every morning, and talk to the common sailors herself, to possess herself of *their real* opinions of the wind and weather. I tried to represent to her, in defiance of my own presentiments, that there was

no more danger in the present voyage, than in any other which her husband had ever undertaken ; but only found how like reasoning with such fears is to twisting ropes of sea sand. She heard every thing that I urged with great patience, but it made not the slightest impression upon her anxiety. In short, her nerves were completely unstrung by the various events of her miserable wedding day, and I could only hope that time and good news would quiet their agitation.

"It was on the Monday evening, that, instead of coming to me as usual, I received a note from her saying that Lucy Barkholme was so low after the funeral,—her married sister having that day left for Yorkshire,—that she had promised to stay with Lucy all night. I was uneasy at this,—for I knew what dismal company two such sick hearts would be to each other ; but I was so busily engaged with my hands, that I had not time to brood over these gloomy things long together. I was sitting sewing most industriously, when a sound reached my ear, which I understood as well as the physician does the hectic spot upon an invalid's cheek—the first shrill herald of a gale—a low murmuring, so low indeed, that I said to myself stoutly, 'She will not understand it, after all it may come to nothing ;'—and I pursued my work, resolving, if possible, to believe that my senses had cheated me,—nay,—I tried to sing to drown the sound, but it would not do,—the tune died upon my lips, and I could not help going to an upper staircase window which commanded a tolerably extensive view. The appearance of the sky was fearfully menacing : huge masses of purplish black cloud, of every fantastic form, such as towers, ships, enormous trees, were sailing rapidly over a field of pale greenish hue in the quarter where the sun had set, and the wind, which every moment became more keen and peremptory than before, scattered the smoke of the neighbouring chimneys hither and thither, as it were into fragments. 'The Lord have mercy upon poor Mary Anne ; this will be a stormy night,' said I ; then again I put my fears aside with the thought that in all probability Lucy would monopolise too much of her time and thoughts to permit her attending to the weather. I went down stairs again, and stirred my fire : and as I could not chain myself to my needlework, went to my little book shelves, and took down a volume—it was Falconer's Shipwreck. This last evil omen so completely unsettled me, that I felt that I could no longer remain quiet at home, and hastily putting on my cloak and bonnet, I went to the house of mourning, which was only a short distance from my own.

"The place from which a corpse had been carried in the morning must always look cheerless and dismal in the evening.

Captain Barkholme had been a miser as well as a tyrant, and so totally disregarding of all home comforts, that his house, which was large and awkwardly built, was barely furnished, and looked desolate at the best of times. The old servant, who, for love of their mother, had remained with his daughters through all their trials, ushered me up the wide oaken staircase into the melancholy parlour, where the two young women were sitting. This room was at the back of the house, and much shut in by higher buildings: but I nevertheless wondered that the gale, which was fast increasing in violence, did not seem to have pierced the apprehensive ears of poor Mary Anne, and this unconsciousness struck me so forcibly as to appear almost unnatural. Lucy and she were both of them surprised at my entrance, well knowing how rarely I stirred abroad after dusk; and I hesitated so much in endeavouring to account for my visit, that I am now amazed, when I recollect how little they seemed to notice this want of readiness. I know that I proposed to stay with them all night, for I felt a presentiment of impending evil which nothing could charm away, and which made me resolve to remain where I was, in case of my services being required. The old servant was ordered to prepare a room for me: she frowned, and seemed on the point of raising some objection,—and then, as if some sudden thought struck her, left the apartment.

“I do not pretend to tell you how that miserable evening went over, except that I talked as fast as I could to keep myself from listening or thinking. It was strange that poor Mary Anne, who, till that day, had only one subject of discourse, never once adverted to George’s absence, excepting to remark that ‘it was a rough night,’ which surprised me yet more and more, as it seemed that she *did* hear the storm. I did not then know that her daily oracle, a humane old sailor, had told her, that, by that time, the Royal Elizabeth must be out in the open sea; and that she relied upon his words as implicitly as upon her Bible.

“Bed-time came at last;—we kissed each other and parted for the night. I was conducted by the servant into a large dark room, to which a bright fire, and a more liberal supply of furniture than was the general use of the house, gave an air of comfort. I did not undress myself, but, leaving my candle on a table near the fire, threw myself upon the bed. By this time the storm had reached its wildest, the wind roared furiously in the chimney, bringing down clouds of dust, and chips of brick at every gust, and assailed the large old fashioned window with such violence, that I expected every moment to see the floor strewn with its shattered panes. The fire in the grate

flared fitfully into the room, and one bright tongue of flame leaping out further than the rest, disclosed to me, what I had not hitherto noticed, a large mirror above the chimney piece covered with a sheet.

"I was in the room from which the dead man had that morning been carried out!—I sprung up from the hateful bed, and my first impulse was to rush out of the chamber, but I knew that I must then disturb the other inmates of the house, who would not have offered me this accommodation if any other had been available; and besides, I took shame to myself for the weakness of my fears, when I remembered the One who is present and protecting everywhere. I could not, however, persuade myself to lie down again, so I threw an easy chair close to the fire, lighted my candle again, and sat waiting—for, do not smile at me if I tell you that I had as distinct an impression of the presence of Death, as if he had stood before me in a tangible form: in fact, so great became my terror, that I dared not turn round in my chair, and felt a comfort in its original cause, which was that the *mirror was covered*.

"I have been told that I fell asleep—I know that I did *not*, for I heard distinctly the tremendous uncontrolled tempest, which raged with unabated impetuosity; and yet, through all this, I heard and could count the beating of my own pulses, as full yet as minute as the tick of a watch. I noticed also the fire burning low, and the candle expiring, but I could not prevail upon myself to extend my arm to trim it. The door of the chamber was on the other side of the fire to the one on which I sat,—I had taken my eyes from it for one instant, when they fell upon it again, it was open, wide open; for I could distinctly see the black cavern thus revealed upon the dusky brown glow which mantled the corners of the room.

"I breathed thick and low, and the oppression which I have described to you became every moment more intense and constraining than ever was weight pressed upon a sleeper by night-mare: and yet every sense and perception was sharpened. Presently I thought that I heard upon the stairs an irregular lumbering sound, as of a heavy sack raised from step to step,—but I was not aware of any decided tread. I could not choose but look, and saw, as clearly through the gloom, as you can make out objects in the dark parts of pictures, a tall figure in a long sea-cloak, standing motionless in the door-way. The head was uncovered, the long black hair streaming with water, the bright dark eyes, set and staring. I thought that the appearance made strange un-life like motions with its lips and hands, looking fixedly towards the bed, as if it were holding



mute discourse with some one there. I knew the face as well as my own. The horror which seized me is beyond description. I could not have stirred, nor turned round, if life itself had depended upon it. For a moment, I tell you, I saw this apparition, and then it seemed to melt into the gloom, like a bubble disappearing in water. The strange sound which preceded its coming I heard no more.

"I remained for a few seconds entirely motionless. My sensations were totally different from any that I ever experienced before: excitement and an over-powering sense of the nothingness of earthly things, being strongly mixed up with mere animal terror. But, ere long, the last preponderated. I arose, and keeping my eyes fast shut, tottered out of the room, —down stairs,—made my way into the chamber where Lucy and Mary Anne were quietly asleep,—threw myself upon the bed, and I believe, fainted. When I returned to consciousness, they were standing over me half dressed, and morning was already in the east. I kept the story of the night to myself, and endeavoured to lay the blame of disturbing them upon sudden illness; yet, whenever I ceased speaking, I had that awful vision before me—I was roused out of my own thoughts by Mary Anne saying 'We will breakfast betimes, for I must go down to the pier head, and inquire if any damage has been done at sea.'—I shuddered to hear her talk, and both Lucy and myself vainly endeavoured to prevent her from putting her intentions into execution. She paid no attention to us, and continued incessantly repeating to herself: 'Pearson told me that by this time the Royal Elizabeth was out in the open sea, and that then there was no danger.' Pearson had lied, alas! to quiet the young wife's fears. The Royal Elizabeth had been detained in the channel by contrary winds.

"This fruitless persuasion of mine, had, however, the good effect of strengthening my own courage. We breakfasted speedily, and in silence, and then accompanied Mary Anne down to the riverside. The morning was bright, but the wind so high that none who could remain at home would have wished to go abroad; and heaps of slates and chimney-pans in the streets, and the comfortless appearance of many unroofed houses, showed how violent the storm had been. In fact, when we reached the pier head, we found the strength of the wind yet so great that we could hardly stand upright. It was a wild scene, and the fierce gaiety of the tumultuous sunshiny sky and the hissing water now at full tide, contrasted strangely with the woeful and intensely interested expression of the few that braved the gale like ourselves,—old sailors turning their spy-

glasses towards the signal poles : anxious merchants wrinkling their brows with care, and holding their hats on their heads ; and shivering, half-dressed women and children clinging together to maintain their footing. Before us lay the river boiling up in short crisp foamy waves ; the water was of a muddy turbid colour, and full of shreds of timber, and bits of sea-weed as small as if they had been chewed. We arrived at an unfortunate moment. The corpse of a poor drowned sailor had just been washed up, and they were carrying it to the dead house upon a board. The face was thrown upon one shoulder. They said the neck was broken, the bare hands and feet were all bloody, and the trowsers, (his only remaining garment,) torn into small holes, as though they had been cut with knives. The people shrunk together as the body was borne past them, and many turned away their heads ; but Mary Anne fixed her eyes upon it as eagerly as if her fate was at the mercy of their scrutiny. A sort of half smile ran across her face, and she grasped my arm so violently that it bore the print of her fingers for weeks, as she cried out eagerly—'It is not—it is not he !'

"I entreated her to return home, to wait for tidings there, which Mr. Wells was certain to send her. And she, to whom constant change of place seemed to bring relief, consented. What a day we passed ! every moment sending messengers down to the office, who constantly came back with the same answer,—*no news* !—Her agitation became so violent that I began to fear for her reason, and when evening approached without bringing any tidings, I proposed, that to relieve her mind she should go herself to the office and make inquiry. She answered me with a short hysteric laugh,—'And so you are beginning to be uneasy ! Let us go at once.'

"We reached the office about half past five ; a time, when not many of the clerks were there, and the few who remained lounging about the desks, could or *would* give us no satisfaction. While we were waiting, and she, poor soul ! was pouring over the ship news in the newspaper, the conversation of two of the common porters caught my attention, and I drew near them to listen.

"'She was not out of the channel early yesterday morning, Thomas ; Davey who came in last night, told me so.'

"'Of what ship are you speaking,' asked I.

"'The Royal Elizabeth, ma'am,' answered the man, touching his hat.

"'And,' put in the other, 'she leaked when she went out to sea, Graham,—that's the mate, ma'am,—told me so, himself ;

and he laughed, for he said crazy boats lasted the longest :— he's as bold as the devil.'

"I could hear no more, and turned away from the ill-omened talkers. Now the clerks began to flock in from their dinners, and looked somewhat surprised to find two ladies in the middle of the office, standing there at such a strange time of day. Our situation became very unpleasant, and, having satisfied myself that no news really *had* arrived, I was endeavouring to prevail upon my charge to return home, when a sudden rush of all the young men to the counter interrupted me. I heard one of the clerks say, 'To think of letters coming in such state!'—another cried out 'Whatever is all this bran for?'—'Good heavens!' exclaimed a third, 'look here, the Royal Elizabeth's letter bags! she is lost! de—!'—when the cash keeper put one hand on his mouth, and with the other pointed towards us. There was a moment's dead silence. The poor terrified creature began to tremble, and sink upon her knees, and ere I could support her, or any help approach, fell flat upon the floor in a swoon, from which I thought,—and, God forgive me!—*hoped* that she would never recover!

"It was at least two hours before we durst make the slightest attempt to move her, and even then, she was so much more dead than alive, that I expected, each moment, to feel her breathe her last in my arms. I was anxious, however, to convey her out of the immediate reach of rumours which began to come in, bearing more and more certain intelligence of the loss of the doomed vessel, it was said with all hands on board. Mary Anne, however, never revived till her fate was decided beyond the shadow of a doubt, by the arrival of the handful of passengers whose lives had been spared, and who had seen Captain Barkholme washed from the deck of the Royal Elizabeth a few moments before she struck on the rocks near the old Head of Kinsale.

"The poor widow recovered, but only to become so childish and confused that no one can tell how much she feels or remembers. Mr. Wells has been as good as a father to her. He settled an annuity upon her, and at her own request, removed her to a quiet village in Warwickshire; 'Any where,' she murmured, 'to be out of the way of the sea!' For my own part, I have reason to believe that she has some enjoyment of life; except when strange fancies torment her, and she thinks that her husband is long in coming back, and will sit waiting for him at her cottage gate for many hours at a time. But such fits do not come very often.

"The coincidence of which I promised to tell you is this. I

was sitting alone, on the day when the first of the passengers I mentioned as being saved, arrived in town, when I was called down to speak to the disagreeable looking clerk of St James' Church. He came to me (because he did not like to distress the poor widow by his presence,) to desire me to restore to her poor George's wedding ring which his wife had that morning found while she was cleaning the church. It was broken! I have kept it by me ever since."

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## THE STREETS, No. 2.

## THE WORLD UPON WHEELS—A FANTASY.

"How provoking!" cried my fair friend, "another pin gone!" I stooped, as in duty bound, to seek for it.

"Do not trouble yourself—this is the seventh that I have dropped within the half hour; I wonder what can become of them all!"

"What," said another gentle voice; "if there be a world of pins, in some star or other!"

We all laughed at the conceit, and to one of the company, who has the unprofitable habit of dreaming with his eyes open, it opened a long train of amusing speculations and images. For I thought that I was in the country of which the lady had spoken—the region where the lost pins of all ages are reunited. The monarch of that strange and glittering empire, was a diamond which had dropped from its place in some fold of Cleopatra's robe, which the queen, in the ostentation of her extravagance, had forbidden should be sought for at the moment of its loss,—and it had thus been overlooked by page and waiting-woman, when the gorgeous banquet was over. I walked to and fro among the people, an industrious race of those commonplace individuals, of whom an entire row at least is dismissed to its destination, every time that Belinda makes her toilette. I discovered also the Canton of crooked pins—the territory too, of those spectral looking creatures, whom some evil chance hath decapitated—the quiet places where bodkins lay their lazy length along,—and the Elysium of departed needles; but while I was pursuing my researches with increasing curiosity, methought that some of the inhabitants of this singular country,

jealous of the intrusion of a mortal, pricked me so keenly that I cried out,—and behold, I was wide awake!

So deep indeed, had been my trance, whilst I was busy exploring the mysteries and curiosities of this pin-world, that I had bid my friends good night, and walked out into the street without knowing it. I was now on my way home, before one of those vacant spots of ground, which at Christmas time, are occupied by itinerant caterers for the amusement of the public. The scene had that sort of barbaric life and animation about it, reminding me of the accounts one has heard of the palace precincts of the rich Black Kings in Africa. I have always fancied that the approach to their presence must be through much such a vestibule of tawdry finery, and noise, and dirty crowds. On the present occasion, I was dazzled by the number and variety of the spectacles before me, and could not help saying aloud: "Well, if I have left the world of pins, it is to alight in the fairy-land of the World upon wheels!"

It was some moments before I could look coolly round me, and take an inventory of the incongruous sights and sounds of this extraordinary region, so confused was I by the cries of the motley company of spectators, and the clang of the wretched music, which seemed valued in proportion to its dissonance. In the centre of the vacant space of ground, now hardened by a frost three weeks old, were stationed three enormous caravans of wild beasts, "containing," as their panegyrists set forth, "the united natural treasures of both the hemispheres," and naturally taking precedence of the meaner establishments on either side of them, in right of their superior size, and their band of beef-eaters arrayed in tarnished livery, whose horrible concert of wind instruments out of tune, must have had an absolutely surgical effect upon any ear, which found pleasure in well-assorted harmonies. Above their heads, brilliantly illuminated by coarsely flaring lamps, were pictures, as large as life, of "the great Bear, and the little Bear, and the Nylghau of the sandy deserts, and the Cassowary, and the Crocodile and the Boa-constructor" (for which new reading I am indebted to one of the crowd)—and upon the wooden steps leading to this palace of animated nature, was stationed a gigantic figure, chosen for his stentorian voice, who never ceased bidding the generous public to the entertainment within,—whose vociferous invitations reminded me of the "what d'ye lack?" times, when shop-keeping must have been an occupation worth pursuing, for the variety and amusement it afforded, instead of being as it is now, a respectable hum-drum calling, carried on behind counters, and under the shadow of festoons of drapery.

Cornerwise with this splendid menagerie, a *corps-dramatique* had pitched its tent, and to stimulate the curiosity of the gaping throng, ever and anon some hero in tin helmet, or some queen in pink calico train strutted out, enacting dignity in dumb show; and then, as if recalled to consciousness by the shrieks of delight which their stately presence failed not to elicit, retired as majestically as they had come forth. Once an hour too, a *corps de ballet* turned out to show the resources of "Mr. Hick's unrivalled company;" but the exhibition of their skill brought me no mirth, for the night was bitterly cold, and I could not help wishing for an armful of blankets wherewithal to shawl the red necks and redder elbows of the scantily dressed *dansuses*—and yet many of these had probably, of their own mad choice, preferred so scrambling and degraded a life as this, for the sake of the trumpery and tinsel thereto appertaining, to the duties of a more regular and profitable way of earning a livelihood.

Next in importance to these was the house of the Giant!—What poetry and legend lies in the name!—the mind at once pictures it as some lofty rock-pillared cavern, decorated with huge shapeless carved images, like sea-monsters turned into stone. But how were such pleasant and awful fantasies mocked by the neat appearance of the black and yellow mansion, with a chimney, and windows pranked out with muslin curtains—a front door with its knocker, and brass plate, with the Giant's name engraven thereon! Nor was the Giant permitted the dignity of a solitary life—he had his companions, "the Muscovian dwarf, the smallest woman in Europe, and the "large girl" whose portrait, in white frock and pink toque was so satisfying, that one stepped back a yard, at the bare idea of encountering such a mass of flesh and blood, and, when one looked at her apparently tiny residence, next began to wonder, like Peter Pindar's King Solomon over the apple dumpling.

"How—got the apple in?"—

This was, without doubt, the favourite one of all the minor entertainments, though more expensive than the theatricals, and less diversified than the show of the learned Pig opposite, whose *programme* of exhibition boasted, "in addition to the feats of this wonderful and almost rational animal," of a performance upon the musical glasses, "and imitations of the feathered tribe by the *Sieur Sanché*." These monsters too, were patronized by people of a somewhat better class; persons who despised the representation of "the Outlaws of the terrible glen," as a low performance, and the learned Pig's display as only child's play. It were end-

less to describe the coat of inferior exhibitions which surrounded the aforesaid : Punches—raree shows—wax work, containing the King, the Queen, Bonaparte, the Cham of Tartary and his wives, Burke and Thurtell,—and all to be seen for a penny !—it were almost endless still, (could such a thing be,) to recount the humours of the crowd of gazers—the strange remarks, credulous, shrewd, coarse, and witty, of the company assembled within this department of the World upon wheels.

But the thoughts which arose upon turning away from these head-quarters of hubbub, are not so easily disposed of. What strange squalid lives must these itinerants lead, when not occupied in exhibiting themselves or their curiosities ! They are as separate a class in themselves as sailors or gypsies, and, in the course of their constant vagabondising, and constant alternation between misery and display, must pass through adventures, and experience feelings, with which those who pass smoothly along the highways of this life, can never become acquainted. How curious would be the histories which a confessional might extort from the members of this Thespian troop !—what tales of coarse reckless revellings, and low knavery—what ill-expressed strivings of imagination, vouchsafed to its possessor in measure sufficient only to render him lawless and thoughtless—what compunctious remembrances of days, when absolute want of food drove the run-away into wistful thoughts of his father's house, quiet and perhaps sternly governed, but provided with bread enough and to spare. How many such admissions as these might be wrung from the most careless ! mixed up with so many strange and stirring occurrences, that the ear could not choose but listen, while the judgment condemned. The giant and the dwarf too, would have their story to tell, and one of a yet more painful cast :—they would complain of constant confinement, of unnatural means resorted to to exaggerate personal defects, of the coarse insolence of vulgar starers, of hard treatment from those into whose hands it was their evil hap to fall. They would tell such a tale as this, I say, if their feelings had not been blunted, and their faculties narrowed by the miserable life they led. It is to be hoped that this last is the case,—that they may not be tormented by the perceptions which make so many recoil at the bare idea of looking upon them ;—and it is to be hoped yet more that this custom of the old feudal times which we have retained, (while we have discarded so much that is picturesque and poetical,) of regarding those whom Heaven has visited, as fit objects of entertainment, will, ere long, wear out, and be obliterated by the spread of cultivation and good feeling.

But which of us has not known moments when a sudden inclination to wander has seized him, and he could be easily

brought to think, with strange longing, of the lot of those who may be drawn about in their habitation, if they like it, half the world over! To think, for instance, of the enjoyment of passing from town to town at will; of halting, on some autumn evening at the outskirts of a wood to gather nuts, and roast potatoes in the true gipsy fashion!—Such wanderers as we could envy, in such a mood, must surely have another sense or two, in addition to those possessed by people “who sit at home at ease,” and know the count of the chimneys which their windows overlook. While these free people are living, the world is going round under them. New scenes and new faces meet them at every step; if they have breakfasted in a dingy country town, they may eat their dinners in the midst of some free heathery common, or within the sphere of the scent of a bean-field, and still be at home; and halt to sup under some ruined wall, catching the last sunshine, just out of a rich old fashioned village. In such a humour as our present, the small trials of scanty meals, wet days and windy nights are forgotten, and we covet nothing so much, as to harness a pair of horses to our elbow chair, and set off to see the world at once!

But enough of such immature, and (some will say) unprofitable fancies—and yet into how small a corner of the World upon wheels have we peeped!—No mention has been made of the province of stage coaches—so fertile in incident and character, so precious to the novelists of twenty years ago:—though it is strange that in these days of gossipry, no Jehu has raked up his reminiscences of the people whom he hath driven, and the changes, which the road, daily travelled by him for so many years, hath undergone. No attempt has been made so much as to enumerate the different classes of equipages, albeit, if the vehicles in a coach-maker's hospital could be induced to talk, they would, doubtless, recount marvellous pithy and profitable things. Nor, descending thence, have I considered carts, taxed carts, ass carts, (the meanest of all wheeled carriages, excepting the model of a ship drawn through the streets by the maimed and one eyed sailor—a strange presentiment having “changed the spirit of my dream.” Chemistry is at work in his laboratory and Mechanics upon his models, nor will they labour in vain. Mr. Vallance's tunnel will be made available, and people be *shot* abroad on their journeys of business and pleasure. Rudders will be contrived for balloons, and, if wheels be allowed to remain, they will only be spared to such vehicles as can be propelled by Mr. Pocock's kites, judiciously regulated by reins. And thus the things, whereon I have ventured to lucubrate, shall depart like the phantoms of a vision, and be seen no more!



## SOCIETY IN A SEA-PORT TOWN.

## BIRDS OF PASSAGE.

THE chapter of things should never be quitted for that of persons, without strict self-examination on the part of the chronicler. It is totally impossible to stand alone in the midst of the world without feeling neither love or hatred; it is almost as impossible to treat of that world, and remain unbiassed so far by our individual impressions, as not to flatter or falsify the original in the picture we are attempting. What an unreckoned up sum of wrong thinking and consequently acting, do we owe to the scandal devised by embittered feeling, and slighted pretension; to the impatience of the fastidious author, and the arrogance of the narrow-minded one, as displayed in their works. How delightful then, would it be, if some inhabitant of another planet would alight upon ours, with spirit and interest enough to carry on the game among the rest of the puppets, and superiority enough to protect his temper from being ruffled by its vicissitudes: with a keen eye to discern and dissect character withal, and a spirit sweet and charitable enough to allow their full consequence to temptations and unfortunate chances, and to excuse foibles and littlenesses. We might then hope to see a true picture of *life as it is*, set before us. At present, we can expect nothing better than a faint copy or a caricature.

It will therefore be by much the most prudent for a resident to refrain from attempting any very minute description of the society of a sea-port town, lest he should be charged with personality, satire, etc. To speak generally of its spirit, is another and easier matter. To say, that in a place singularly destitute of nobility, its inhabitants have themselves substituted an aristocracy of wealth in place of one of family, is, perhaps, some little beyond the precise truth; and yet, it comes nearer to the truth, than any other form of words which could be used. There is as much subdivision into sets and sects, as much exclusiveness, with all its train of bad consequences, as in the wider and nobler circles of the metropolis—and over all, and

through all, a mercantile spirit at work, which is singularly unfavourable to the development of mind. There is, indeed, scarcely any inducement for a man to exact and improve the powers with which he has been gifted, if, valuing every thing by the standard of pounds, shillings, and pence, he feels that his standing is secure, that he may talk wisdom or folly, as he will, and still be looked up to in society, as a person of consequence and authority;—nay, that he is in most circles more popular as he is, than he would be, were he to bear the character of a hard reader, or a deep thinker. The withering influence of Fashion, has also its share in depreciating the standard of intelligence. Our circles are not wide enough to allow of individuals setting up as *characters*; in which case, alone, does she tolerate any originality of thought, word, or deed—she therefore, imposes upon her subjects a uniformity of conduct and manner; trammelling them as effectually within her artificial ordinances, as the conjuror, when he confines the chicken within his magic circle of chalk.

But, it seems to me, that we are fallen on particularly cheerless times, as respects ease or enjoyment in general society. As far as concerns the men, the age of dandyism has, thank Heaven! passed over: the delicate youths who put their hair in *papillotes*, and ironed their cravats upon their necks, are now striving in the mart of business, for their rising families, or shivering over their cheerless bachelor hearths, remembering days and glories gone by, when it was at once their occupation and their pleasure to rival the caprices of fair ones as fantastic and *maniéré* as themselves. But though the present race of men may be less finical than the last,—poor society is no gainer by their increase of manliness. If they are less sedulous attenders of balls than their predecessors, they are more constant at dinner parties;—and at these they love to herd together, to talk the strong talk of emptiness—of their dogs, and horses, and amours,—and to settle the great questions of the day, over which statesmen are racking their brains, and for the right understanding whereof, philosophers are patiently drawing their conclusions from the experience of the past, in a few stout words, against which there is to be no appeal. As to pursuit of any kind, beyond the above-mentioned amusements, it is almost utterly unknown among them, and even should any one be followed in secret, it is not to be alluded to in conversation, if its follower would keep clear of the artillery of idle tongues, ever ready to satirize what their owners do not comprehend.

On the other hand, the present system of female training,

has its share in making society a burden, instead of an excitement and an exercise to those who understand something better than vapid talk about the nothings of the day, or the more racy amusement of quizzing your *vis-à-vis* in a quadrille. While Fashion attacks any tendency to *bluism* with her most blighting ridicule, and inculcates a cold *posé* demeanour, under which every natural impulse and feeling is to be impenetrably concealed, Education has parcelled out the time of her victim, and carried her at set hours from French to history, from history to music, from music to metaphysics,—and so on, without ever stopping to study the natural biasses and talents born with her. What a marvellous discrepancy is there between these two codes! Routine (for it is dishonouring Education to allow her counterfeit to assume her name) ordains that the young lady of the nineteenth century, shall know every thing:—Fashion values her in proportion as she talks as if she knew nothing—Routine crams her with book-learning,—Fashion teaches her to sneer at clever people; and thus, between the two, the natural buoyancy of girlhood, which never stayed to consider whether the laugh was a tone too loud, or the step a thought too quick, or the talk a shade too confidential, is as completely crushed as if it had never existed; and there seems now no longer any intermediate step between the child on her way to school, and the well-tutored, well-dressed woman, armed at all points for society, and equally proof against enjoyments and annoyances.

Grammarians tell you to prove a rule by its exceptions, and it would be as ridiculous as false to say that we have not many who stand out, in bright relief, from amidst this general barrenness. But sectarian differences of religion and politics keep these much asunder: and the powers, which they might individually employ for the edification of general society, are sadly cramped by the suspicious dislike wherewith the world of common place people regard them:—a world unjust as it is vain, and, at any time, more ready to overlook moral defect than to forgive mental superiority. Thus it is, that unless a man wishes to expose himself to the sneer of the million, he must as sternly confine every symptom of enthusiasm and imagination within the silence of his own breast, as if it were a noxious influence, instead of being a link of that golden chain which connects the world below with the world above. Thus it is that the teachers of our children, those to whose authority and discretion we intrust our most precious treasure, are so often humbled to the condition of superior menials;—that the weak and ignorant listen to the malice of antique prejudice or the

folly of ridicule, and regard the artist as a hireling from whom a certain quantity of a given commodity is to be *purchased*, instead of as one who is honourable, from the inspiration of talent which has descended upon him, and as worthy of courtesy and consideration, as if he were the founder of a fortune, or the rectifier of a popular abuse. And what is the consequence of all this strange pride and pertinacity?—The artist, heart-sore at finding that, in these enlightened days, the calling to which he belongs is considered little more respectable than that of the *jongleur* or mountebank in the old feudal times, is too often driven by his irritability into low and disgraceful courses; and if he is too high-minded to become a sycophant, frets out his life in scorn of those, to whose patronage he is compelled to be indebted for the means of subsistence.

This is stating the case broadly, and some will say rudely; but the harm which society both commits and receives by perpetuating this narrow spirit, is so great, that one cannot touch upon it with a light pen or an indifferent heart. How much beauty, how much embellishment, how much instruction is excluded by the poverty of its judgment! how much talent is destroyed in embryo, how many a gentle and earnest spirit embittered for ever by its uncharitableness! It is not to be wished that all should be men of letters, all *dilettanti*. Heaven defend us from affected enthusiasm, and the apish criticisms of the shallow! but to every class should be allowed a clear stage and a candid hearing; and all who are sincerely devoted to their several professions, be they followers of arts, sciences, or commerce, should meet on equal ground, and cease to cast in each others' teeth, the terms of opprobrium bequeathed to them by the imperfect enlightenment of their ancestors.

But, to return from these grave considerations;—there is one feature in a sea-port town like ours, at once its pleasantest and most painful, of which one might write down reminiscences from "July to eternity" without the fear of giving offence to any one—I mean, the frequent appearance amongst us of "birds of passage." Most pleasant is it to welcome to your hearth cultivated and kind-hearted strangers, to exchange your ideas with theirs, to become, through their means, familiar with the persons and habits of foreign countries; and most painful, when they have ceased to be strangers, and you have long loved and cared for them as part of your own household band, to bid them farewell, and to know that it is more than probable that, on this side of the grave, you will meet each other no more!

Nothing, indeed, is more agreeable than to have free admis-

sion to a family circle which is open to such chance society. Our town is especially rich in foreigners : the trim and gallant Frenchman, the true hearted German, the earnest and industrious Swiss, the passionate Italian may be found in almost every circle. I cannot but recal with pleasure the remembrance of a few acquaintances I have made in one house where there is nothing of style, nothing of money to attract, nothing but a hearty English welcome, and a readiness to sympathise with feelings and interests a little out of the beaten track of every day life. There might not seldom be found the gifted of our own land, as well as the stranger within its gates. There it was that I often met with one, for awhile resident amongst us, the music of whose poetry has filled so many an ear,—and yet the spirit which inspired her verse was less bright and varied than the one which shone out in her conversation ; whose thoughts flowing spontaneously and richly forth formed living breathing pictures : from whose lips any romantic incident, any heroic trait, came forth, with yet a further grace and glory : whose imagination, when set free, can riot among the quaintest and most etherial fancies, and delighted all hearers by its profusion, as well as its gamesomeness : one, in whom with the utmost feminine delicacy, was combined a subtle and sprightly humour, which could extract rare merriment out of the occurrences of the passing moment : whose mind seemed to embrace and retain, as it were, by instinct, every thing that was elegant and refined. Alas ! she is now gone.

But among the less known individuals who occasionally joined the circle I describe, and who are now scattered to the ends of the earth, there was much to interest, much to remember. Many of these were foreigners, sent hither for a term of one or two years, to test the strength of some love compact, or to acquire knowledge of other languages and mercantile experience at the same time, and who won their way, at first by their homelessness, in a strange land, by their uncommon speech and ways of thinking, and afterwards, by a degree of regard on their parts, which one of the English, who, as the classical author of *De Vere* so justly says, “are slow to move,” could hardly have conceived within so limited a space of time, and certainly, if conceived, would not have exhibited.

There was Henri D——, that strange mixture of good feeling and bad temper, of talent and obstinacy, whom you loved as you do a child, in spite of his childish naughtiness ; although you never knew whether “the observations he chose to make,” (to use his own phrase when provoked) might not terminate your intercourse in some sudden and awful quarrel. He was every

thing by turns : a dabbler in science, a musician, a politician, and all these with a vehemence and *abandon* which made wise heads shake at his whimsicalities, till they resembled a mandarin's in a tea shop. One night, sitting up till dawn, to practise harmonics, and airs on the fourth string of his violin, till the most musical ear could endure no more, and tortured neighbours rose up from their sleepless beds, and remonstrated ; on the next day, almost setting the house on fire, his own bed in particular, with some fulminating powder, or explosive gas ; anon, deep over head and ears, in fierce and noisy investigation and arguments upon the secret history of the French revolution, and withal, so affectionate while so unmanageable, that you loved him even while you ached with following his changes of mood. There was Victor S——, a true German : sentimental, deep-hearted, musical, and fond of good cheer, who fell in love regularly about once in six weeks, and as regularly upbraided me for coldness, because of my inexperience in *la belle passion*, and whose handsome face, guitar, and inimitable waltzing, were so successful with the fair, that he had an excuse for his frequent inflammability, such as an obscure individual like myself could never have pleaded. There was poor, heavy, honest, right minded Marc P——, full of excellent feeling, and overflowing with quiet and deep remembrances of his Swiss home, his sister and her flowers, who always seemed to me to be as unfit for the confinement of an office, as a shepherd would be to take charge of a cotton factory ; and who died suddenly, with few to attend upon him, and fewer to remember him, save the mere acquaintances of the moment like myself. O what memories must have haunted his last hours ! what fond impotent yearnings after that home, to speak of which, even when he was in strong health, never failed to call up a tear into his broad blue eye,—what vague yet intense wishes to be buried among his own people ! I never pass by his grave in a neglected corner of a dismal suburban church-yard, without feeling a strong pang of regret, and making a vow, as often broken as made, that I will never more embark any regard or deep interest in a “bird of passage !”

## THE FURNIVALS.

*Steward.* Be patient, Madam, you may have your pleasure.

*Lady Bornwell.* 'T is that I came to town for.

*Shirley's Lady of Pleasure.*

## PART FIRST.

It is not many years since a genteel middle-aged lady resident in one of the midland counties, was surprised, whilst sitting at her breakfast, by the arrival of a letter, widely differing from any of the epistles of her regular correspondents, which, for the most part, contained one side of condolence for some ailments, or of expressions of personal regard, one side and a half of gossip; and half a side and the ends filled with commissions or accounts of the execution of the same. The letter which made Mrs. Peters smile and sigh at the thoughts of old times, ran thus:

"My dear Charlotte,

"I flatter myself that I am on the point of creating a great sensation by suddenly presenting to your notice your old and attached school-fellow, (for believe me, dearest Charlotte, I have carried that attachment with me over half the world, and brought it home with me undiminished; minds like ours, when once united in the bonds of amity, are not easily unlinked!) Yes, my dear Charlotte, I am once more in old England, after having endured many vicissitudes, and passed from the sweetest spring time of youth, in the bloom of which we made our acquaintance, to the maturity of middle age. So have you, my love, but the flight of time need not prevent us from interchanging confidences as we did formerly: and I hasten to show you that I at least am not altered, by losing no time in claiming a renewal of our intercourse.

"You will long ere this have heard, my dear friend, of the irremediable loss which I sustained in the death of my dear Furnival, and how the sole charge of four daughters at his decease devolved upon me, alas! from the quickness of my feelings and the tenderness of my affections, how unfit for such a charge! My girls, have, however, thank Heaven! made their mother's care a labour of love; and though great disparity of years exists between them, the utmost harmony reigns in our little circle. Yes, I am proud to say it, we are a happy family, and what is

there in money, my love, (my poor F—— you will be glad to hear, left a comfortable, though by no means a splendid competence behind him) to compensate for the absence of that most inestimable of all earthly treasures, domestic felicity? My Charlotte, will, I hope excuse me, if, with a mother's partiality, and a friend's confidence, I attempt their portraits.

"The eldest of my flock, called after myself, Letitia, resembles me no less in person, than in name. She is considered very handsome, and is endowed with that dearest charm of beauty, utter unconsciousness of its possession. Her capacity, though not brilliant, is substantial and sufficient, and she loves her own home with a devotion equal to that which made me feel it so momentous a sacrifice to accompany my dear Furnival to the altar. She is my chief comfort, though I would not for that reason have you undervalue my Alice, my second daughter. Of a more mercurial temperament than her rightly judging sister, my Alice has caused me many fears, unconsciously on her part, dear girl! I must own; but though she is a little volatile, I know that I can depend upon her principles, and is every day attaining to more regulative power over the sallies of her own imagination, which you will agree with me, my dear Charlotte, are any thing but desirable in a young woman, accompanied as they are in the case of my Alice, with a warm temperament and a persuadableness which makes me watch over her anxiously: though, of course, without exciting suspicion on her part. Of my two youngest daughters, Hester and Carolina, (the last so named in a freak of poor dear Furnival's, because she was born on the day that a ship of his, of the same name, arrived from America,) I have less to say: they are amiable and affectionate children, and, under the care of an exemplary young woman, Miss Annesley, whose only fault is being a little too romantical, (and that I must endeavour to correct,) will, I doubt not, prove a credit and comfort to me, when their elder sisters leave me in compliance with that law of nature which deprives mothers of the solace of the company of their offspring, at the time when they need it most."

"Dear me, what long sentences!" said Mrs. Peters, laying down the letter, wiping her spectacles, and taking breath. She proceeded thus—

"Mr. Radenhurst, the agent for my property in Tortola has prevailed upon me,—you remember, love, my extraordinary facility of temper,—to establish myself in this thriving and opulent place. I have sacrificed my own wish for retirement and quietness to the interests of my girls. They must enjoy the advantages which a town alone affords; were it not for their sakes,



how should I delight to fly to some sequestered retreat like your own, and spend the remaining years of my life amongst affectionate friends, in peacefully remembering the follies and pleasures of the days of our youth.

"Write to me immediately—often, my own Charlotte; write to me as unreservedly of *your* hopes and prospects, as I do of mine, and my girls! and believe me, that want of space alone, (I never cross a letter, my poor dear Furnival used to say that a woman who crossed a letter *must* be a bad manager,) prevents me from explaining to you more fully, how devotedly I am always

"Your affectionate,

"LETITIA FURNIVAL."

"Well to be sure!" said the quiet lady, "to think of my getting such a fine long letter from Letty Johnstone! I wonder whether her hair is as flaxen as it used to be?"

The above high flown production brings us at once into the full current of our narrative, as to waste words upon finishing a picture already as complete as the one presented by the lady's own letter, would be tedious and impertinent. Mrs. Furnival had no sooner established herself and her flock in our thriving and opulent city, than she began to look about her for acquaintance; and, being a woman of open hand, not uncomely exterior, and active ten years beyond the usual activity of forty-seven, "success," to use her own language "crowned her endeavours." Her card rack was crammed with the names of a large acquaintance; and had not the hours "which her dear girls devoted to their studies" been carefully portioned off from the rest of the day, she was wont to boast, in the triumph and thankfulness of her heart, that her knocker would not have been still for a moment. But her girls were to be accomplished as well as fashionable: to play with the last finish of musical perfection, and to draw sketches from nature, and for this purpose, masters were sought out at any cost or charge, and entertained with good words and better cheer, that they might take an extraordinary interest in their pupils' advancement. In short, within a wonderfully narrow space of time, Mrs. Furnival's name was almost as well known in the town as the mayor's, or the rector's; and many of her guests were so complimentary as to assert that the attractions of the mother surpassed those of the daughters.

Letitia Furnival, the eldest, and the musician, was easily set up with a grand piano, and a harp, and two masters. The cultivation of Alice's talent for drawing seemed to be a matter requiring rather more deliberation. Mrs. Furnival lamented loud and long to every acquaintance, "the great want of graphic

talent in the provinces. Could they recommend a drawing-master to her?—Mr. Love's colouring was cold—Mr. Skel-horne's perspective had been objected to; and then, ma'am," Mrs. Furnival would say confidentially, "(Alice, my love, you need not listen); she is *so* sentimental, *so* susceptible, that it requires particular care to choose a master for her, and drawing, you know, Miss Mottram, drawing is a silent occupation, and I never should have had patience to sit by while she was taking her lesson; so that you see, ma'am, it is particularly necessary to be guarded in making my selection. Mr. Douglas, ma'am?—I never heard speak of him before, who is Mr. Douglas?"

Who Mr. Douglas was, is not to be told in a few words. Every body agreed in describing him as being *so odd*! His father had amassed a large fortune as a merchant, and, having been accustomed from his childhood upwards, to consider money-making the one thing worth living for, had early endeavoured to instil similar propensities into the mind of his only son. It was in vain: you might as easily have made a poker of a painter's brush, as a "steady clerk" of Robert Douglas. The boy even in his childhood, showed that degree of quiet energy, which would have warned any person with more than one idea not to indulge himself in the fallacious hope of turning aside the very strong current of natural propensities. He *would* be a painter,—he was detected and punished for scrawling gryphons and queer looking old men, whom he called Polanders upon the waste leaves of the ledgers, to which he was introduced when *so* small, that he could not descend from the counting-house stool without assistance; he appropriated his weekly half-pence (old Douglas being far too economical to allow his son anything beyond copper), to the purchase of a colour box; he sat up stealthily at night, and drew by the light of hoarded candle ends: and as soon as it was dawn, applied himself with avidity to his beloved labour of daubing. In short, Nature manifested her will so early and decidedly, that every one, except the nearest party concerned, saw that it was useless to think of opposing her.

But old Douglas, like many a one before him, thought within himself that he would be stronger than Nature. He resolved that Robert *should* be a merchant, and employed every engine which want of sympathy, sarcasm, coercion, and neglect could furnish, to withdraw his son from his favourite pursuit. His labours were fruitless. The acanthus was not hindered from growing by the tile with which its leaves were pressed down; they formed the capital of the fairest order of Gre-

cian architecture;—the boy's genius throve in all the more original fashion for being discouraged and repressed, and every day that he grew older, he bent himself to carry its aspirations into effect more firmly and coolly than before. He was not one of those wild, hot-brained characters, who run riot in eccentricity, pleading talent as an excuse for their follies:—the development of his reason kept pace with the unfolding of his abilities: and the two conjoined made such a formidable head against the purposes of the old man that, at last, when Robert had reached the age of eighteen, with many a bitter feeling of disappointment, he was fain to desist from urging his son any further; declaring, at the same time, that, as the boy had chosen his own path, he should maintain himself therein, for that *he* would lend no assistance of purse and countenance to contravene his own intentions.

The young man assented to this decree without a single remonstrance, and sedulously set to work to further his own views. And first, with the intention of laying by a fund for the purposes of foreign travel, he began to take pupils, to the amazement of every one who had heard him profess himself to stand in need of further instruction. These did not trouble themselves to consider, that since the early age of five years old, he had been unremittingly occupied in exercising a quick eye, and a ready hand upon every object presented to his view—that he had walked miles to study a prospect, or catch a peep of a picture or a statue, and returned again to correct his first sketches; they did not know that he was himself endowed with as keen an impatience of mediocrity, as the most fastidious critic among them, and they were presently undeceived as to the extent of his acquirements by his extraordinary success. In fact, he would have already been in Rome, at the time when my tale commences, had not his father's health begun to decline very rapidly; and Robert, with a dutifulness equal to his energy, deferred the execution of his plans to attend upon the old man; without, however, the satisfaction of finding that he had gained any ground in his affection. It was the merchant's boast, that he never forgave or forgot; and his friends who knew him best shook their heads, as they prophesied that he would go down to his grave without bestowing a blessing upon his son's endeavours.

This, then, was the master engaged by Mrs. Furnival for Alice: "Just the thing—so steady, so gentlemanly, and so grave; *he* was not the man to put any nonsensical notions into her daughter's head, she was sure!"—

Never was good lady more completely mistaken in her calcu-

lations. Alice Furnival was, indeed, endowed with a more than moderate portion of that romance, the delusions whereof were so much dreaded by her mother. In fact, she possessed it in a place of talent of a higher order. She could, to a certain degree, appreciate the gifts and graces of other minds, without possessing many of her own; if she had been educated among persons of intellect, she might, possibly, have been made an amiable and elegant young woman; as it was, for want of support, her fancies, (to use a garden simile,) trailed aimlessly over her mind, without growing to a strength sufficient for the bearing of flowers or fruit. She was a devourer of novels in secret; she kept an album and sometimes wept over it, and then again wept because her lot was cast among people who did not understand her character,—the common complaint of young ladies when they have nothing else to complain of. The engagement of Douglas as her drawing-master was dropping a spark upon tinder, with a vengeance! She had heard his history, and been touched by it; "It was so like something written in a book!—*such* an interesting young man as he was!" She admired his drawings—she admired his hands as he drew; the chivalresque and melancholy air of his person, (he was considered by common observers to be black, shy, and somewhat morose-looking). From this, the step to admiring what he said, was a very easy one: and, it must be confessed that, flattered by a reverence which had never been paid to him by any of his other pupils, Robert laid himself out more in talk, during the hour in which he initiated Alice into the mysteries of savage looking old trees, and tumble-down houses, than in any other of the twenty-four.

Gradually he was compelled to own to himself that he looked forward to this lesson with peculiar interest. His pupil, as she was almost clever, so she was almost pretty:—but a strain of weakness ran through the character of her face and figure, as well as of her mind. Yet a ruder being than Robert could not have refrained from contemplating her with pleasure, as she lifted up her white ringletted brow from her drawing, to listen with eager interest to his more eager explanation of the terms and difficulties of his favourite art.

Time danced away so quickly over the heads of this gay family, that two years seemed gone like a day, and Mrs. Furnival found herself "still undeprived of the company of any of her offspring." True it was, that her house was the resort of an infinite number of gentlemen—she boasted that she could command three to every one lady when she gave a ball; but they came and went, and as she thought within herself, it

was very "extraordinary that nothing came of it,"—surely they had not heard of the hurricane which had devastated half of the Plantain Waters' estate, and, for the present, diminished her income materially! Meanwhile, a suspicion began to creep across her mind, "that Alice was wonderfully steady over her drawing, and yet she did not finish so many pictures either." For the first moment when she became aware of the tendency of her impressions, she was unspeakably shocked—gradually, she began to remember "how civil Mr. Douglas had been to them—so quiet and unobtrusive! and how he had drawn that sweet picture of Alice in an oval, which hung over the drawing-room chimney piece, and which some gentleman, who knew all about pictures had mistaken for a Mary Magdalen; and then his father was very rich, and every body said, likely to die soon; and Hester and Carolina were growing up fast, and promised to be handsomer than either of their elder sisters, and better mannered—Miss Annesley was a nonsuch of a governess!—In short—she really thought that it might be best to let matters take their own course; "and, my dear Charlotte," thus she concluded a letter to Mrs. Peters, wherein she somewhat mistily stated her surmises and perplexities, "if I commit the happiness of my darling child into the hands of all-powerful fate, it is because I know my own inability to decide for the best, and not that a mother's heart has ceased to vibrate with the deepest anxiety for her daughter's welfare, as also to feel that unremitting affection for my old friend, which makes me subscribe myself your devoted

LETTY FURNIVAL."

And how was Robert all this time?—Why, dreaming such a dream as would never have entered the head and heart of a person one jot less enthusiastic and inexperienced in the world's ways than himself:—in love of course. He had sketched out to himself a plan of improving and instructing one so docile and capable as Alice, and was little aware that, instead of carrying it into effect, he was himself becoming day by day blinder to the deficiencies which he had proposed to amend. At last, (and how it was brought about without a direct declaration, no one concerned ever could or would tell,) it became an understood thing that Robert Douglas was to be regarded as Alice Furnival's admirer; her mother, all the while secretly resolving in her own mind, that she would only allow the affair to proceed *in case*—, and, for this purpose, while she always received Robert with the utmost frankness and gaiety, she discountenanced all rumours among her acquaintances with—

"Now I beg,—now *really* there is no truth in it,—now I would not have it said for the world, it would place us all in the most awkward situation possible—for my Alice's sake," and the like; and, as the young lady in question was by no means so entirely occupied with her tacit engagement as to wish to shut herself out from society, or to refrain from enjoying herself when she was there, the world was simple enough to believe Mrs. Furnival's version of the story; and careful mammas wondered "that she would allow Mr. Douglas to be so much about the house,—but his father was enormously rich," and so forth.

Things were in this state when, one day as Robert and Alice were sitting drawing together, or to be more precise, as he was leaning over her shoulder, to finish a certain birch tree, which, as she declared "would not hang prettily," Mrs. Furnival burst into the room in all the amplitude of cloak, hat and feathers, with an open letter in her hand.

"Bless me! how quiet you are, and *me* in such a bustle! where's Letty?"

"Walking out, I believe, mamma."

"And Hester and Carolina, and Miss Annesley?" continued she eagerly, "tell them *all* at once, why cannot they come to me?—*Such* a piece of news, Alice!"—

The children and their governess obeyed the summons, and Mrs. Furnival, as was her wont, continued walking up and down the room at full speed, talking as she went:

"*Such* a piece of news! I never knew before that Arthur Furnival had left any children;—let me see,—he is your second cousin, and, I dare say, will be here to speak for himself by the next ship."

"A cousin, mamma!" cried the young girls.

"Children! how you shout! I wish, Miss Annesley, that you would be so obliging to make them attend a little to the modulation of their voices;—yes, Alice! a cousin! who has not been in England for these ten years or more, has written to me from New York to request my permission to pay his respects to us as he passes through. It seems that he is rich, and, I should think, gentlemanly. I am sure of it by his writing! but, listen to his letter; and I declare, here's Letty! dear girl! always just at the right time!—I beg you fifty pardons for not speaking to you before, Mr. Douglas; nay—now, you are not going;—well, if you *must* go, good morning."

"I do not wish to intrude"——

"Nay, Robert," whispered Alice gently, "you know that we all consider you as one of"—her mother laid a peremptory finger on her arm, and the lover was allowed to depart.

"And now girls! now Alice!—by the way you had no need to have asked Robert Douglas to stay—now for the letter!"—

"What about, ma'am?" inquired the imperturbable Letty. Alice and Miss Annesley could not help laughing at her quiet voice and apathetic manner.

"Miss Annesley—Alice—here is nothing to laugh at. You shall hear, Letty my love, you shall hear what he says!"—

"Then it is a letter from a gentleman," remarked Letty.

"Hush, love! I am going to read it;" and standing still in the middle of the room she began—

"My dear cousin,

"It was with sincere pleasure that I chanced, a few days ago, to hear that a family of near relations, (and such agreeable ones too,) were now residing in ——— I have long been a wanderer, having never, from inclination or necessity, entered upon a living—

"A living—Letty—what can he mean?"

"A living—ma'am?"

"Perhaps," suggested Miss Annesley, "he may be in the church."

"Ah very true! a very likely thing!—to go on then—

"Entered upon a living;—but I am at last tired of vagabondizing, and look forward with pleasure to returning to my own country, and to making acquaintance with such relations as yet remain to me. I shall sail from this port by the next ship, and only send this before me as an *avant courier* that you may not be startled by the actual appearance of yours very sincerely

"SYDNEY FURNIVAL."

"A charming letter, isn't it?—Sydney Furnival! what an elegant name! and rich too!—Alice come up stairs with me at once, I must have some talk with you—you need not, Letty;—did not Captain Cronie say that he should come into luncheon?"

"Yes, mamma."

"Well then, will you make him my best compliments, and excuses, and say that I am particularly engaged this morning; and do not forget the ginger, you know that he dotes upon it; and I hope he will come as usual to meet our new relation.—Bless me! and the wind is fair for vessels coming in; come, Alice! there is no time to be lost."

Mrs. Furnival led the way to her dressing-room; and having disencumbered herself of her walking apparel, took one of the

easy chairs, and motioned her daughter to occupy the other; assuming an air of thought and mystery, which sate ill upon her comely and usually restless features.

"Alice," said she, "I am going to talk to you for good."

Alice groaned inwardly, remembering a pert remark which Carolina had once made on a similar occasion: "that mamma was very overcoming when she began to lecture."

"Alice, do you remember how old you were on your last birthday?"

"Twenty-three, mamma."

"I hope not: surely not! why then Letty must be twenty-five! but the more need for both of you to mind what you are about. I was married before I was nineteen: my poor dear Furnival was so pressing!"

"But, mamma, Robert and I are both of us willing to wait," said her daughter simply, not as yet, dreaming of any one else; and, to do her justice, little skilled in *finesse*.

"Ro——Whom did you say, child?" said Mrs. Furnival, affecting stern surprise.

"Mr. Douglas, you know mamma," replied Alice softly, hanging her head.

"My love, what is it I hear? what have you been doing? what have we all been doing? A drawing master! Alice, you have surely not committed yourself—I am angry—I am *very* angry with you!"

"But, my dear mamma," returned Alice, beginning to cry, "you know——"

"I know! No, indeed, I do not know! and when our new cousin is on the point of coming over; and is so likely, that is, *might* wish to pay his addresses to you—O my love, not a word!—it must be given up! what would Captain Cronie think of such a connexion?"

"But mamma," sobbed Alice, moved by this unusual display of vehemence, "you forget Letty——"

"And what would Captain Cronie say to *that*?" replied her mother triumphantly—"No, no! I trust that Letty is provided for, and a brilliant prospect it is. The castle Cronie estates, he told me; so lately as the night before last, bring in a clear five thousand a year! and—besides this fancy of yours—a mere teacher! What will our new cousin think of us? Answer me, you silly girl, have you committed yourself?"

"I thought, mamma, that you understood——"

"I understood!—I wonder how you could imagine such a thing! But *has* he—now tell me at once,—if you do not mean to make me very angry——"



Now Alice knew that Mrs. Furnival's *very angry* meant something very terrible indeed, which was only exhibited once in seven years; and the remembrance of the last wrath was so awful, that she durst but say: "that she was sure that Robert Douglas wished to marry her; and that she should—but that no definite engagement had passed between them."

"I am mightily glad to hear it," replied Mrs. Furnival, whose brow seemed to change its intention of thundering that day, "mightily! such engagements are very awkward things to dispose of; we are all safe then, so long as nothing has been *said*. Alice, you must look your best while your cousin Sydney is with us; you shall have a pink satin."

"But dear mamma, (now don't look as if you were going to be angry again) if you please I do not wish to—to—"

"Well, simpleton, to *what*?"

"It would be using him so very unhandsomely!"

"Cousin Sydney, do you mean? *him* is any body. Mercy upon us! what time and trouble it takes to manage some people! Don't you see, you foolish child, that nothing has been *said*; such things go on every day. I insist upon your doing as I bid you; and after all, no one knows how it may end; and so—in short, you need not be uncivil to Douglas, you know."

"Thank you, mamma," said Alice, wiping her eyes.

"But remember you are to take most particular pains to please cousin Sydney,—a scholar, a gentleman, a travelled man, Alice, and a *rich* man!"

Alice could not help listening a little less unhappily than she had done awhile before.

"Not that I would do an unhandsome thing for the world," said her mother; "but fancy must give way to reality, and experienced heads must manage silly young folks' concerns. Well now, have you done crying?—you shall have a new pink satin; we will go to Beck's and buy it at once, and look at his furniture prints—I shall fit up the yellow room for cousin Sydney."

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#### PART SECOND.

"Men have died and worms have eaten them,  
But not for love."

WHILST the mother and daughter were deep in the perplexities of India sprigs and fast colours, Robert Douglas was at

home, listening to a communication, no less extraordinary in its way, than Mrs. Furnival's. His father, who was now entirely confined to his chamber, had sent for him, immediately upon his return from his morning's round, and Robert, who drew auguries from the slightest notice (it having often happened that the two had been weeks in the house without any intercourse passing between them) obeyed the summons with the alacrity of hope.

The old man was sitting in the full light of the window, closely wrapped in a grey duffel dressing-gown, with a fine and spotlessly clean white cambric handkerchief knotted loosely about his neck. His face, at a first glance, might have been thought fine and venerable, from the strong lines of his features and the profusion of long white hair which shaded it: at a second, a physiognomist would have discovered traces of worldly wisdom and mean desires sufficiently marked to destroy the illusion. His appearance, however, was eminently respectable, his voice sonorous, his pronunciation plain and good; he always fixed his eyes full upon the person whom he was addressing, and never removed them, or turned them aside, till he had entirely finished his speech.

"Sit down, Robert," said he very coolly.

"I hope you find yourself better this morning," was his son's answer, as he took a chair close to his father.

"You are too near me, sir!—there—that chair will do. No, sir, I rather think that I am worse:—a month ago I was at the office every day, and now I can hardly crawl down stairs."

"I should hope that when spring comes—"

"Stop," said his father, in the same severe tone: "I have nothing to do with your hopes, except to tell you what you are *not* to hope. Robert, I was told yesterday, for the first time, that you are in love."

The young man crimsoned deeply. "I should have told you myself, sir," said he, "but—"

"Nay, I have no claims upon your confidence; but I suppose you will wish to marry the young lady. Now, sir, I have sent for you to explain to you the circumstances in which you stand, with respect to your expectations; it has been always my intention to tell you whenever you should wish to settle for life—"

Robert bowed respectfully, and his father went on,

"As long as you were only living on here from day to day, it did not much matter how rich or how poor you were; now, I suppose, it is or will be of some consequence for you to know. I have been disappointed in you, Robert;—cruelly disappointed!

All my hopes, all my labours have been rendered worse than fruitless by your obstinacy and disobedience; my love has kept pace and proportion with them. I cannot, indeed, regard with complacency a living monument of my vexation; therefore your presence, instead of being a satisfaction to me in my old age—”

“I beg, sir,” said his son rather quickly, “that if you have anything with which to reproach me, you will also do me the justice to remember—” but he checked himself; he could not bring himself, even in self-defence, to state the sacrifice of his own views, which he had made that he might attend upon his father.

“You interrupted me.—This being the case, Robert, it would be absurd to expect that I should enrich you with the fruits of my long life’s labour; you, who have made its latter years so full of vexation. When I die, (I do not tell you this out of anger or sudden whim, you know me to be cool and inflexible), you will inherit an income of three hundred a year; the rest I have bequeathed otherwise. It behoves you, therefore, to exercise some prudence in deliberating how you mean to live, before you load yourself with the burdens which belong to married life. I tell you this, once for all, that you may hereafter have no cause to complain of having been permitted to indulge false expectations. And now, sir, have the goodness to leave me, I hear Doctor Hammond upon the stairs. Go, if you please, and remember what I have told you.”

Robert snatched up his hat from the floor; and, stunned, shocked, grieved beyond the power of utterance, rushed out of the house. He made his way to the pier head, which, at low water, is always a deserted place, and flung himself down upon a coiled cable. To think over the late conversation was no pleasant employment: it was not the idea of the probable loss of money which grieved him, not the prospect of a mean inheritance which had sent the blood to his cheek, as if propelled thither by an engine: it was the stern-heartedness which had prompted so unjust a resolution, it was the passionless tone in which the communication had been made, that stung him to the heart. And soon a strong feeling of indignant resentment would have arisen had he not repressed it by turning his thoughts into another channel. He was bound in honour to make Alice acquainted with the news. How would she bear it? What influence would it have on the more than good understanding, which, at present, subsisted between them? There was little comfort in the involuntary answer to this mental question; and as if a weight of scales seemed to fall from his eyes, cold doubt was the reply—how different from the lover’s

honest trust which would maintain in the face of all the world, that his mistress was superior to all mercenary considerations! She was so gentle, so facile;—and had been brought up to consider the luxuries of life as indispensable to her happiness, and even to her respectability. Yet this disappointing conviction, which flashed across his mind with a vividness not to be extinguished, did not by an atom, diminish the strength of his affection, which continued, as it had begun, unbased on reason. For two years, he had unconsciously anchored all his hopes of future happiness upon it, and now he might be the destroyer of his own peace, by performing the duty of acquainting Alice with his father's intentions.

With this purpose of heart he availed himself of his first disengaged evening to call upon the Furnivals. He found the drawing-room full of company—there was a strong detachment of “the standing army of men,” as they had been facetiously called, who lounged in whenever they had no better engagement: sure, at least, of finding Mrs. Furnival to laugh at, a good supper to eat, and choice wines to wash it down. Captain Cronie, a tall red-haired Scot, six feet two inches high, was sitting very dutifully beside Letty; Miss Annesley was winding silk from a chair; Hester and Carolina learning their first lesson in flirtation from two spare cavaliers, who were thought too small game for their elder sisters; Mrs. Furnival was playing at shorts with three other young men; talking, laughing, dealing and winning, all in the highest spirits;—and she, whom his eye sought out at the first instant, Alice, was sitting a little apart from the noisy throng, with—O most unwelcome sight!—a stranger seated on a footstool at her feet, looking up, and talking to her with great animation, whilst she, it seemed, listened not displeasedly. Her head was drooped towards the speaker—her eyes were half closed—and her mouth unconsciously answering his narrative with little quick smiles, which passed away only to return again and again.

The stranger, to whom he was introduced as the family's new relation, was a tall well-made man, with a dun complexion that might serve for either twenty-five or thirty-five, a down look, and crisp black curly hair which covered entirely a head a little too large for strict proportion. If, as Robert jealously thought, he was deficient in maimer, the lack thereof was compensated abundantly by a fluency of speech, equal to Mrs. Furnival's own, and a conceit of himself, which made the presence of strangers rather a stimulus than a restraint. He was already quite at home among his new relations; he had, in the course of the first ten minutes, adroitly possessed himself of

Mrs. Furnival's good graces ; he had shaken hands with Captain Cronie, as a person whom he was resolved to like for his cousin Letty's sake ; and had overcome Alice with such profuse and eloquent descriptions of his rambles in foreign parts, such a phantasmagoria of traveller's wonders, "of the riches of nature in the tropics ; of the primeval grandeur of the American forests ; of the unexplored sublimity of the Andes, and the extreme awfulness of a Chilian earthquake ;"—and the like,—that the tender-hearted maiden was thrown into a perfect fever of delight and enchantment thereby, and began to regard the bold youth who could so well describe what he had seen, with an extraordinary degree of veneration. Douglas gazed for an instant on the unpleasant picture before him, in speechless uneasiness—when a simple voice behind him recalled him to his senses with—"Bless me, how like old Mr. Tubb, the button-maker !"

It was an old clergyman who spoke : one of that class of unaffected, pious and faithful-hearted divines, which has almost merged in the two extremes of over-strained enthusiasm and haughty self-indulgence—a man who was active and yet unpretending ; and though wise in alarming the self-deluded, and gentle in encouraging the dispirited, as ignorant of the ways of the world as a child. Mrs. Furnival was fond of Mr. Evesham—"for he had known her poor dear Mr. F—" and he was occasionally found among her guests ; perhaps because he thought his presence might have its use ; perhaps, because he held in no disdain the *occasional* amusement of a rubber. He was very much interested in the fortunes of Robert Douglas, and had made one or two ineffectual attempts to mediate between him and his father—and now shook the young man's hand warmly, with an expression of countenance which said : "You see, I don't forget old friends for new ones,"—an indiscreet mode of greeting a jealous lover certainly, but a characteristic one.

"Have you seen *this* Mr. Furnival before ?" said Mr. Evesham, drawing Robert aside ; "I do not like him much."

"No, I suppose he only arrived yesterday."

"The day before—and see how intimate he is with the girls already ; calling them Letty and Alice as familiarly as if he had known them all the days of his life ! I never thought that young men who had been long abroad came home good for much,—if anything."

"And have therefore always so strenuously recommended my trying to be content at home," replied Robert a little bitterly.

"He is to preach for me on Sunday," resumed Mr. Eves-

ham, meandering pleasantly along in the current of his own thoughts. "I wonder what sort of a sermon he will make."

"I wonder too," echoed Robert mechanically.

"You are right! you are right! he *does* not look like a clergyman—and such bold eyes too, as he has! I wonder at Alice's allowing him to stare at her in that confident manner.—I'll go and break up their conference."

"For Heaven's sake, no!" cried Robert, his words choking his throat.

"Why," continued the other, "they look much more like lovers than Miss Letitia yonder and Captain Cronie;—bless me, if he is not holding Miss Annesley's silk! I must go and disturb these two, however;" and escaping from Douglas he made his way across the room.

Left to himself, the unhappy young man proved all the bitterness of feeling, which every one must have experienced who has seen himself neglected for a new comer;—and this was further deepened, by the consciousness that the secret which he had come thither to impart was not likely to reinstate him in his former welcome. Twice he arose to go—and his heart failed him. At last the whist party broke up; Mrs. Furnival, who had won every game, and had the satisfaction of seeing everything proceeding just to her mind, swept towards the corner in which the artist had niched himself, with a book in his hand, so ingeniously held (up side down) as to screen himself from the possibility of catching or answering a look, *should* Alice be disposed to waste one upon him.

"Well, Mr. Douglas," said she very gaily, "why are you moping here all alone? I cannot permit any of my gentlemen to be so unpolite. Come, get up, get up, and do not look so sour! Here, Miss Annesley, come and amuse Mr. Douglas."

Miss Annesley declared her willingness to do her best; and as she rose to obey Mrs. Furnival's summons, the rest of the party, anxious perhaps for some little change, followed her example.

"O, Mr. Douglas, do you know—that sweet picture of your pupil—cousin Sydney admired it so much, that do you know, I have absolutely given it to him. He is quite a judge, I can assure you and draws beautifully. He is to give me his own picture in return."

"Have you seen any of his drawings?" asked Mr. Evesham simply.

"I, I—Alice—do ask cousin Sydney to show you some of his drawings—he will refuse *you* nothing! Mr. Douglas, do

not you think that there is an extraordinary likeness between them? Alice is my poor dear Furnival's image; they might almost be taken for brother and sister."

"Can the force of folly any further go?" said Douglas to himself, approaching Alice, whom her cousin had now quitted—"Alice," said he very softly—"Miss Alice Furnival, when will you allow me to speak a few words to you in private?"

Alice looked round her, as if afraid of being watched or overheard,—perhaps for some assistance. But no help was at hand; and her lover repeated his question.

"To me, Mr. Douglas? we are so much engaged just now—but do not look so grave—let me introduce you to my cousin Sydney—you will like him amazingly, I am sure—he is so cultivated—so agreeable and has seen so much that—"

"That you cannot spare a few moments to an old friend! Well, it is perhaps no more than I ought to have expected. But do you mean, Alice, that it is to be all over between us?"

"Indeed, Mr. Douglas," replied the feeble girl, now trembling with real agitation, "indeed I cannot—you must excuse me this evening—I am not well."

"Well Alice," said Robert, sinking his voice to its lowest tone: "I think I see how it is: but I did not expect that you would have given me up *quite* so easily—this new cousin, then,—is—It is perhaps best for us both. Farewell then, and God bless you!" His composure was fast failing him, and he had no other resource than to leave the house abruptly, and for ever. No one inquired "why Mr. Douglas had not stayed to supper?"—for Mr. Evesham was already gone; and Alice, after a little soreness of conscience, protested to herself, that she was too much hurt to be able to think about it; and allowed herself to be anew interested by cousin Sydney's showy tales of foreign parts.

But the victim of Mrs. Furnival's schemes for the aggrandizement of her daughters and his father's implacability, could not bear all these changes with quite so easy a mind. He looked at the naked truth, that he was cast aside and slighted, with a determined fortitude which did not shame his energetic character. He suffered intensely, it is true, but wisely; for he resolved to probe the wound to its core, to the end, that his cure might be effectual. For two days he allowed his tenderness to apologize for the capricious and heartless behaviour of Alice, in the hope of receiving some message, some note of explanation. On the third, when none came, he manfully turned aside his mind from the contemplation of what might have

been and what was assuredly now never to be—and resolved to seek for comfort and diversion of his thoughts, in arranging and maturing his plans for the future.

One instance, though slight in itself, must be mentioned, to show how resolutely he refused to yield in the least to the fond luxury of nursing his sorrow. A taste for music, as is often the case, was conjoined with his talent for drawing; and among other modes of indulging it, he had joined an amateur choir of gentlemen who sung the service every Sunday in a certain church. The church was the one at which Mr. Evesham officiated—where cousin Sydney was to preach on the coming Sunday—and though his natural feelings prompted him to fly as far as possible from the place, he resolved to command them, and to appear in the orchestra as usual—though the effort was so great that he heard the beating of his heart, as distinctly as the treading of his feet, when he entered the church-yard. The bells were ringing merrily, the river, close beneath his eye, was sparkling and dancing in the sunshine; but he noticed them not, and stalked towards the belfry door, wrapt in the gloom of his own reflections.

It was well that he was not aware of a party entering the holy precincts by an opposite gate and about two stones throw further from the church than he was. These were Mrs. Furnival and all her family—Mr. Evesham in his canonicals, cousin Sidney and Captain Cronie; in short, the group of all others, that he would have least wished to have encountered. Mrs. Furnival with Alice leaning upon her arm, walked the first, between the two clergymen, a little hurried by the breeze, which, however, to compensate for its boisterousness, did full justice to her well-turned ankle and neat boots. "Yes, cousin," said she, "this is a fine old church; the tower is one of the very few remains of antiquity—"

"Not at this door to-day," said Mr. Evesham, "we have just time to enjoy the sea view—and will go in through the baptistery. Ah! yonder is Douglas with his psalm book, looking as sober as if he were a Dean—See—at yonder corner of the tower—Almighty God!—look!—look!—"

All eyes followed his finger, as, rigid with horror, he stood rooted to the spot, pointing towards the building. The tower, which had resisted so many gales and the safety whereof was in no wise lessened, (so knowing people had said,) by its swinging to and fro, whenever the full peal of bells was rung—seemed for one instant to lean over the body of the church, a hand's length further than it was wont;—so far as to be beyond the possibility of recovering its balance. The compact stone



work began to tremble, as if agitated by some inward convulsion—the unconscious ringers within applied all their strength to the ropes—then the outer side of the spire was sent with a sudden gash; and, with a long deafening sound, its whole length fell at once upon the roof of the church, which gave way beneath it, like a cobweb under a stone. A stifled shriek from those within the building—a piercing cry of agony and horror, from those collected in the church yard—and one or two persons rushing madly out, maimed and bloody—and the catastrophe seemed complete! So sudden had it been, that its spectators could hardly trust the evidence of their senses; and sick with the excitement of the moment, reeled wildly to and fro like men drunk with wine!

It was a blessing, for which the congregation could never be sufficiently thankful, that this calamity happened before the service began. One or two old persons and a body of children belonging to some charity school had, indeed, been seen to enter. Immediately, as soon as the horror of the moment had subsided, a crowd of able-bodied men, (for the church-yard was presently filled with a multitude of people,) made their way into the building through the chancel doors. They found that only that part of the roof, which had covered the south aisle, was left entire;—and that so overloaded that it was momentarily expected to crash down upon their heads. The rest of the interior of the church was filled with a confused mass of rubbish; with one or two pillars yet standing, and a few ragged rafters and the bare blue sky above. Heedless of the warning of falling plaster from the small sound portion which yet remained, they began to force their way among the ruins and to encourage with assurances of help those who, it was hoped, might yet be spared. In the north aisle, which was almost entirely choked with beams, slates, and enormous stones, they heard the weak cry of a child, and a groan which suddenly died away;—to that point the labourers turned the full force of their exertions. Meanwhile the windows were covered with the faces of those who had clambered up from without and were watching their proceedings with agonized interest. At last, a strong man, a mason by trade, was seen to insinuate himself between two perilous looking masses of ruin, in the hope of finding some clear space within, or some means of delivering those who might be there buried alive. It was in vain—he encountered a mass of destruction, to remove which, would require the labour of hours; he had fallen upon some crushed thing, for he came out with his hands and clothes stained with blood! A shriek burst from the crowd that filled the windows; and many a miserable woman knelt down upon the tombstones

and prayed, in the bitterness of anguish, that her child might not be counted among the slain; but, alas! it was soon ascertained that one detachment of the charity children had entered the church a few moments before the spire fell, and of these only three or four came forth alive!

But to return to the personages of our story:—Mr. Evesham was the first to remember that Robert Douglas had been seen to go in at the belfry door,—that he had never returned. Nothing could prevent this excellent man from forcing his way into the thickest of the ruin, calling upon his friend to answer, —if he were yet alive. Captain Cronie was by his side; as for the rest of the party, they had been escorted home in fits by the considerate cousin Sydney: who judged wisely that “it was no place for ladies,” and led them from the spot.

Meanwhile, as every instant narrowed, so did it also deepen the interest of survivors. Gradually it became known, among the crowd, who must yet be among the ruins. One or two who had been extricated, had been carried home in the midst of their weeping families, too much awe-stricken to rejoice at their preservation;—it became too more certain, that those who had not been drawn or dug out, must have perished; and Mr. Evesham was on the point of leaving the building, with the most miserable fears for the fate of poor Robert,—when, on again venturing into the corner of the south aisle to which a roof still remained,—a low dull sound, as of a voice trying to make itself heard through many stones, reached his ear. He listened again, in an agony of attention—it was repeated. “Hither! hither!” shouted he to the masons, “there is some one alive in this corner.” They obeyed his summons, and Martin, the strong man already mentioned, broke in the baptistry door, by throwing himself against it with all his weight, crying out in his loudest voice “Help at hand!—who is within there?” and listening acutely for an answer, whilst he watched with an upward eye, the roof above, which was now perceptibly bulging downwards.—The same voice as before answered, —but they could distinguish no words.

The space within the baptistry door was entirely filled with enormous fragments of stonework and mortar. The men held an anxious consultation. “It is as much as any one’s life is worth to attempt to pull them down,—but, poor fellow! there must be some one jammed upon the belfry stairs, and we must get him out at all events.”

But how to get him out was the question. It was feared that their very attempt to deliver him who was immured, might itself hasten his destruction; for to remove one stone, was to

incur the risk of bringing twenty after it. Nevertheless, as this was their only chance, they resolved to try it. Mr. Evesham took a pickaxe and crow bar, and worked among them; and in the course of an hour, they had with cautious exertion, penetrated one of the layers of the ruin, behind which they supposed their victim to be imprisoned. They were rewarded for their labour, by receiving an audible answer from the object of their search,—that Robert Douglas was within, and as yet unhurt; though so hemmed in that he could hardly move, and that he feared any further attempt on their parts might end in crushing him to death. Mr. Evesham turned deadly faint on hearing these words;—the risk and peril had now reached their most critical point.

"Indeed sir," cried Martin, "you can do no good here! you had better go out into the air, while we endeavour ——" He was interrupted by the sudden falling of a shower of dust. "Lord have mercy upon us! we are all dead men!" cried one of the masons; but with true English stout-heartedness, they refused to abandon their work of mercy. It was well,—for the cause of this new alarm was presently evident; through a narrow cranny of the ruin, a damp, clammy hand was suddenly forced. "Is Mr. Evesham there?" said the same voice within; "I fancied I heard him speak."

"It is I—Robert—I am here—we are at work to deliver you."

"You cannot," replied the other faintly but firmly, "I hear already something giving way. Shake hands, Sir! for the last time; let me have your blessing, and I pray of you all to leave me, for charity's sake!"

"Leave you!" cried the men, encouraged by hearing him speak so near them, "that we will not, till we have brought you out. Gregory, that bar here! Allen, help Mr. Evesham, he is fainting like!"

The clergyman was now in that state of excitement which rendered his presence dangerous in their present imminent peril. He grasped Robert's hand eagerly. "Bless—bless"—he sobbed out.

"Come away, sir! come away!" shouted Martin, "you must go! some one is calling you without; and you, inside there, draw in your hand. Now boys! death or deliverance!"

Unable to endure the tumult of his feelings any longer, the divine suffered himself to be pushed back through the crevice, and was, in another second, in the open air. He was awaited by a no less moving scene than the one which he had just quitted. The crowd eagerly calling him by name, made way for

him to pass to the spot to which old Douglas had been brought. He had heard of the accident, and, stung by a late-weakened remorse, had crawled from his sick chamber, and dressed in his house garments, made his way thither to ascertain the fate of his son. He had scarcely entered the gates, when, wearied by so extraordinary an exertion, he fell to the ground. Some compassionate persons supported him, and a chair was brought from a neighbouring house,—for he resisted every attempt to remove him, with a violence even more dangerous than his exposure to the open air: and sat, with his eyes strained towards the church, ejaculating such broken sentences of anguish—for he durst not pray—as made those who surrounded him tremble. As soon as Mr. Evesham approached him, he seized him convulsively by both hands. Miss Annesley, who had lingered behind the rest of the party, was supporting his head, for his exhaustion was momentarily increasing, and he cried out vehemently, shedding torrents of tears—"Pray for me! pray for me!—*will* he be saved?"

Mr. Evesham, summoning all his self-command, could not frame one sentence of comfort; but he mingled his tears with those of the miserable old man, who grew more tremulous and incoherent every moment, accusing himself in the most poignant language of severity and injustice: calling upon his son, and promising him the fullest forgiveness and affection if he only yet lived.

At length a low murmur ran through the crowd; it gave way, some one staggered forwards. Mr. Evesham dared hardly look—but it was Robert Douglas—alive, and unwounded, though as pale and as ghastly, as if he had been entombed for a month. In an instant, he was on his knees before his father; in another, the old man, so tremendously stricken by remorse and anguish, "fell upon his neck and kissed him," but *could* not speak. He was borne home and laid upon his own bed; but the conflict had been too strong for feeble nature to struggle through. He never spoke again, and expired quietly that night in the arms of his son!

## PART III.

I am Dromio! pray let me stay!

*Comedy of Errors.*

THE impression which such scenes as the one I have attempted to describe, make upon the frivolous and superficial, is light—and soon passes away. The Furnivals met at breakfast the next morning, and neither by their demeanour, nor any allusion in their conversation could a stranger have guessed, that only the day before they had looked upon so dreadful a sight; or that an intimate friend, (and they had certainly allowed if not encouraged Douglas to consider himself as such), had so narrowly escaped an untimely and horrible death. Every thought, every look of Mrs. Furnival's was devoted to cousin Sydney—and he seemed to be one of those *enfants gâtés* of fortune, who love to be made much of. He devoted himself, in his turn, to the task of pleasing Alice, and kept her in such a dazzled state of mind, with the flowriness of his talk, and the extravagance of his protestations, that she had neither time nor composure to think of the steps by which her heart was becoming fast estranged from its former and long entertained fancy. Mrs. Furnival too, was in ecstasies at the sight. His fortune was handsome, his person pleasing—he was acquainted with so many persons of distinction abroad and at home;—and then she thought, with proud satisfaction, of Letty and Captain Cronie. Happy! happy woman! She relieved herself of but a small portion of the exuberance of her gladness, by writing an enormous letter to Mrs. Peters—and visions of white favours, and coaches, and bridesmaids, and all the other joyous appurtenances of a wedding, danced as vividly before her eyes, sleeping or waking, as ever they appeared to boarding-school girl after she has bought a good fortune, by crossing the sybil's palm with her long hoarded half-crown.

"Here is a hot muffin, cousin Sydney!—Alice, take that other one out of his way—and some marmalade, cousin, of Alice's making,"—(a white or rather an *orange* lie!)

"And so you are going across the water this morning!—

Well, it is a beautiful day, and you will have a charming sail. I wish I could go too, but I must stay at home, and write letters. Bless me! how delightful! Captain Cronie—just in time for breakfast!—a cup and saucer, Potter, for Captain Cronie!—here, sit down, there's plenty of room beside Letty. How well you look, Captain! quite a colour I declare!"

Captain Cronie was obliged, but he had breakfasted.

"Quite military hours, you keep, upon my word!—are you intending to ride this morning?"

A sort of half smile passed over his lips—he was sorry—he was particularly engaged—Miss Annesley—

"Lord bless me! to think of poor Miss Annesley! so terrified as she was yesterday—came home with a face as white as a sheet! and would have fainted if I had given her the least encouragement—ha! ha! ha! I beg your pardon, Captain, but I am in *such* spirits!—Potter, another hot muffin for Mr. Furnival,—wanted!—Well, I will come back directly—in the mean time, Letty, there's that new song you can sing for the Captain—I am sure *he'll* excuse the piano being out of tune!" and away she swept.

It was Miss Annesley who requested the audience. This young lady,—who, though as retiring as the most fastidious or aristocratic person could wish his children's governess to be, was generally entirely self-possessed,—was now much confused—blushed—and hesitated once or twice before she could open the conference. At last, with much difficulty she spoke; and thanking Mrs. Furnival for her kindness and liberality since they had lived together, requested that that lady would be obliging enough to look for some one who might succeed to the situation which she must now resign, and promised to remain with her until an efficient substitute should be found.

"Upon my word, Miss Annesley! I cannot have heard you, surely; I was never so much amazed in all my life!"

"I should be very sorry to have surprised you," replied the governess a little archly, "could I have helped it: and did I not know that sometimes surprises are not unpleasant things—but I should be still sorrier to put you to any inconvenience, and therefore—"

"But, Miss Annesley, why must you talk of leaving us?—what will become of Hester and Carolina when you are gone?"

"They are fond of me, I believe, but—"

"Nay, or if it be *that*, mention your own salary, and you shall have it; I cannot part with you."

"Dear Mrs. Furnival, I am much obliged by your wish to retain me, but it cannot be:—I would have acquainted you with

this earlier, had I not thought that months, and even years might have elapsed before it could take place."

"Take place!—look at me!—I vow as red as coral—why, Miss Annesley, are you going to be married?"

The young lady looked down and said "Yes."

"And who—who? I am rejoiced to hear it. Young women can never settle too early in life. Who is to be the happy man? Mr. Rigby?"—(this was the dancing master.)

"O dear no, ma'am!"

"Its rude to guess, I know," continued her voluble patroness, "but who ever *can* it be?—Mr.—Mr. Evesham!—O yes!—it must be Mr. Evesham!—delightful!—so good and so gentle!—so considerate!—the very man of all others!—Let me run and tell the girls—but how sly you have been!"

"Pray stay one moment—we have been so undecided in our plans—it was but this morning—that the news of his cousin Sir Hector Cronie's death"—

"Cronie!—*our* Captain Cronie!—*what* did you say?"

Miss Annesley made no reply, save a blush.

"Letty's Captain Cronie!—speak—tell me at once!—it can't be!"

"It is as strange to me as it can be to you, now that it is really settled; but we have been engaged for these many months."

"*Dare* you tell me so?—what a dupe have I been! such a thing was never heard of in a decent house before! I wonder you can look me in the face after such clandestine doings—and he too, the hypocrite! to pretend to come sneaking here, after Miss Furnival! it makes me mad to think of it!—and Mrs. Peters, and cousin Sydney, what will they think of it?"

"I am sorry to see you angry, madam; but I think that when you are cool, you will acquit me of having given you any just cause."

"Just! to be carrying on such a thing, and nobody seeing or knowing a word about it! I wonder how you can have the assurance to say so!"

Miss Annesley replied with some animation; "We were both of us particularly careful that no one should guess our secret, and if Hector did make use of the *entrée* to your house, it might be wrong;—yet I think the circumstances in which we were placed excuse it; and beyond this, I am sure that you must acquit him of any ungentlemanly conduct."

"I can think of nothing but your artfulness, and when I was praising you up to every one as such a treasure!—O ma'am, I would not have you remain here another hour, to inconvenience

yourself or the Captain ;—I would not for the world. I will go myself and acquaint him that you are free!" and she strode majestically towards the door.

"Nay, Mrs. Furnival, do not let us part in anger; and by this time, I believe, Hector will have acquainted my friends Letitia and Alice."

"Hector! *our* Captain Cronie! and *your* friends Letitia and Alice! indeed, I am amazed at your audacity! But it is of no consequence, not in the least, ma'am! good bye to you! and I wish you all health and happiness,"—and with a groan of mortification, she burst from the parlour, ran up into her own dressing-room, locked the door, and vented her chagrin in a violent fit of sobbing. So fair a castle as she had built! and to be destroyed by a governess! how could it be expected that she was to endure such an event with anything like patience?

But the same spirit of activity which had urged her to plan and to hope, ere long came to her aid and comfort. She knew that Letty had not very quick feelings, and some one else might be found more suitable and handsomer than the late object of her ambition. Then, too, it would be impolitic in her to seem disappointed;—it would argue that expectations had been entertained, and that was always a great disadvantage to a young woman; and if the scandalous world got hold of such an idea, it might combine it with the supposed ill usage of Robert Douglas, and do an infinity of mischief. As to the letter she had written to Mrs. Peters, what a blessing it was that she lived at Towcester, whence any tales she might spread would hardly reach to ———! so that, all things considered, it was better to gain some credit for keeping Miss Annesley's secret, than to raise a riot because the Captain had fallen short in what was expected from him. Last of all came the puzzling question of what would cousin Sydney think?—but as no meditation could devise a means of binding him or evading his natural wonder, Mrs. Furnival wisely resolved "that as she could get no good by thinking, she would think no more about it;" and thus, by the operation of her reason, restored to her wonted glossiness, she reappeared in the family circle, and even forced her complaisance so far as to congratulate Miss Annesley, and to request that in remaining or departing she would consult her own convenience—Hester and Carolina were now grown to such an age, that it was hardly worth while to engage another governess for them. She tried too, to say some flourishing thing or other to the bridegroom expectant, but to this degree of hypocrisy she could not attain; and he was compelled to carry away his beloved from under the shelter of her protection without the benefit of her good wishes.



Now then, all her hopes were concentrated upon the affairs of Alice and cousin Sydney, and these prospered to her heart's content. He was not slack in speaking his mind explicitly, and requesting, with an impatience which did him honour, that the marriage might be allowed to take place without any unnecessary delay; "he was impatient to be put into possession of so inestimable a treasure," and the like. These words were oil and balsam to the mother's chagrined spirit. As for Alice, she made no opposition beyond a little hanging back, a few picturesque misgivings, a little heart soreness when she thought of Douglas. The particulars of his father's unjust will! had, by this time, been noised abroad, and some wandering fancy that it was not generous to break with one whose fortunes were fallen, *did*, sometimes cross her mind to disturb its dreams of approaching happiness. But these moments were few and far between, and when she had experienced the last spasm of self-reproach on receiving his *pour prendre congé*, she dismissed such unpleasant thoughts from her mind, and resolved, as her mother said, "to enjoy the reasonable delight of contemplating a vista of future felicity."

At length the eve of the day on which the joyful ceremony was to take place arrived, and Mrs. Furnival, though passive on most points, had overruled cousin Sydney's objection to a crowd of indifferent people, and invited a select many to take leave of Alice; who, poor girl was going on the morrow, to leave her for Dorsetshire. Great sorrow was on her lips, but greater joy was in her heart, as she went to and fro receiving the condolences and felicitations of sympathising friends. The happy pair, so soon to be, were sitting together in a corner, engaged in close conversation, which was, certainly, a little unpolite; but, upon these occasions, young people are apt to be so engrossed! Alice had been very low all that day, and only partially recovered by the exhibition of a white satin bonnet with clumps of orange flowers amongst beds of blonde, an absolute garden of millinery—a long veil of French lace to hide her blushes withal, and a pearl coloured satin pelisse, the simple wearing of which ought to have satisfied any young lady—even had there not been a husband into the bargain. Letty too, was not in her usual spirits,—"her friend, Miss Annesley that was, had left town for Castle Cronie, only the day before, and Letty was as fond of her, as if they had been sisters;" while Hester and Carolina, emancipated from the restraints of a school-room, were doing the honours of the house with great and gay zeal. The company were just standing up for a dance on the carpet, when the man servant, who was remarkable for a loud voice and a distinct de-

livery, entered, and announced, "a gentleman below stairs who wished to speak with Mr. Furnival."

"Sydney!—a gentleman to speak with you, who ever can it be?"

"The tailor, I dare say,—take the things up into my room, Potter, and say that I can see no one to-night:—I am particularly engaged, am I not, Alice, my love?"

"Shall I go down and see, Sydney?" said Mrs. Furnival. "Potter surely knows the tailor when he sees him."

"O, by no means, if you please ma'am; desire him to send up his name," said the reverend gentleman, a little uneasily.

Potter disappeared, but returned almost immediately.

"If you please, Sir, the gentleman will not send his name up stairs," and says, "he *must* see you, and *to-night*!"

"Pshaw! how tiresome!—some nonsense or other! I can't go down to him."

"But I can, Sydney," said Mrs. Furnival; "I protest I am curious to know who it can be."

"And, Sir," interrupted Potter, who never gave a message by halves, he said, "that if you did not come down to him, he must come up to you."

"O by all means, Potter," said his mistress, "go down, and give the gentleman Mrs. Furnival's compliments, and hopes he will do her the favour of joining her circle."

"No—no—no," interposed Sydney, turning ashy pale as he spoke, "I will go to him myself, and get rid of him, whoever he be."

"And, Sydney, bring your friend up stairs when you have disposed of your business—he will have no objection to a quadrille, I dare say. Pray, gentlemen and ladies, stand up! Mr. Sherlock, may I beg of you to lead Letty to the piano;—I wonder who it can be that wants Sydney at this time of night; can you guess, Alice?" whispered she to her daughter.

"I?—O dear mamma! I don't pretend to be intimate with his private concerns yet."

"No partner, Mr. Gillibrand?—I am afraid that you will hardly prevail upon Alice to stand up with you to-night,—and to-morrow—Well, it won't do to be sorrowful! and besides she must wait for her cousin—perhaps you will accept of me though, if I have not forgotten all my steps.—Hark! they are talking very loud below!—what can it mean!—Women, you see, Mr. Gillibrand, are always curious,—the same all the world over!—To think of me standing up in a quadrille! what would poor dear Furnival say if he could see me?"

Now, to relieve the curiosity of those, who, like Mrs. Furnival, "wondered who it could be that wanted cousin Sydney at that time of night," we will accompany him down stairs. Slowly and tremulously did he descend from step to step, and when he reached the dining-room door, he paused for a moment ere he could summon resolution to enter;—there was, as far as he could see by the glow from the fire reflected by the crimson walls, a gentleman standing on the hearth-rug.

"Come in, and shut the door," said a stern voice.

"I—I—Lord bless me, Mr. Evesham! is it you? how you frightened me!"

"Now, Sir," said the clergyman, advancing determinedly, and seizing the terrified young man by his collar, "tell me at once, what are you about here, and what have you to say for yourself?"

Cousin Sydney dropped upon his knees as suddenly as if he had been wounded;—"For God's sake, Sir!—leave me; say nothing about it! let me alone only till to-morrow, and I will give you every satisfaction you may require,—only till to-morrow, Sir! have mercy upon me!"

"Till to-morrow, you villain!" cried the clergyman vehemently, "till the mischief is done!—No, Sir! I will call for instant help, and deliver you as an impostor into the hands of justice, if you do not at once tell me who you are and whence you come; you are found out, remember!—If you stir a step till you have told me every word, I will execute my threat that very instant."

"But Mr. Evesham! dear Sir!" moaned out the detected knave, "only till to-morrow!"

"I will not wait another moment," answered the clergyman, whose stratagem had succeeded beyond his fullest expectations, "tell me, in the first place, where is the real Mr. Furnival?"

"In France, I believe, Sir, but"—

"Go on! or take the consequences!—my hand is on the bell!—and who are you?—another struggle, and—"

"My name is Barton."

"I thought so—Barton, is it?—and a pretty scoundrel you are!—and where from?"

"Birmingham!—pray let me get up!"

"Not till I am satisfied—well, and how came you to know anything of Mr. Furnival?"

"We were passengers in the Ajax."

"Ah—I see!—from New-York—and what might you have been doing at New-York?"

"Travelling for orders, Sir,"

ed, in the bitterness of anguish, that her child might enter among the slain; but, alas! it was soon ascertained that one detachment of the charity children had entered a few moments before the spire fell, and of these two or four came forth alive!

return to the personages of our story:—Mr. Evansham first to remember that Robert Douglas had been seen at the bell-fry door,—that he had never returned. No! he prevented this excellent man from forcing his way thickest of the ruin, calling upon his friend to answer, ere yet alive. Captain Cronin was by his side; as one of the party, they had been escorted home in fits by ferate cousin Sydney: who judged wisely that “it was for ladies,” and led them from the spot.

While, as every instant narrowed, so did it also deepen the grief of the survivors. Gradually it became known, among those who must yet be among the ruins. One or two, who had been extricated, had been carried home in the midst of weeping families, too much awe-stricken to rejoice at salvation;—it became too more certain, that those not been drawn or dug out, must have perished; and thus was on the point of leaving the building, with miserable fears for the fate of poor Robert,—when, on turning into the corner of the south aisle to which a window remained,—a low dull sound, as of a voice trying to be heard through many stones, reached his ear. He again, in an agony of attention—it was repeated. “Hither!” shouted he to the women, “there is some one in this corner.” They obeyed his summons, and the strong man already mentioned, broke in the barrier, by throwing himself against it with all his weight, and in his loudest voice: “Help at hand!—what is within and listening acutely for an answer, whilst he watched upward eye, the roof above, which was now perceptibly sinking downwards.—The same voice as before answered, but could distinguish no words.

space within the baptistry door was entirely filled with a fragments of stonework and mortar. The men held no consultation. “It is as much as any one’s life is worth to attempt to pull them down,—but, poor fellows! there is some one jammed upon the bell-fry stairs, and we must get it out at all events.”

how to get him out was the question. It was feared that in very attempt to deliver him who was immured, might bring about his destruction; for to remove one stone, was to

The good man, in spite of his emotion, could not help smiling at the question. "I have at least sense enough left to prevent serious mischief being done:—this young man, Madam!"—

"Do you mean cousin Sydney?"

"No more cousin Sydney than I am, unless he has two names! Clergymen do not usually travel for the house of Rasp and Sharpless, Cutlers, Birmingham, as this card testifies, which he has just dropped from his pocket: and if you want further proof, compare his signature with the real Mr. Furnival's,—but take care of Miss Alice, some of you,—she will faint, I am afraid."

"My poor child! my dear child!" cried Mrs. Furnival, spreading her substantial arms round the damsel, after the fashion of the wings of a brooding hen; "can this be true? Pray, Mr. Gillibrand—Letty—help me!—she is gone! and as for you, Sir," and she cast a furious look on her son-in-law elect, "please the Lord, I will see who you are, when I come down stairs again!"

But to wait for this formed no part of the impostor's plan. He saw that his game was up, his fraud detected. Springing into the hall with the rapidity of lightning, he seized a hat,—and before any one had recovered presence of mind, so much as to attempt to hinder him, he was out of the house, and half way down the street.

Mr. Evesham, it must be confessed, was absolutely dismayed at the success of his scheme. It is true that his suspicions, which were with the utmost difficulty excited, had been, for some days, fully aroused; and when once set upon the watch, no eye could be more acute or vigilant than his. The strange hurry of Cousin Sydney's wooing, the very unclerical omission of one or two prayers in the liturgy, when he had officiated in the pulpit, his ignorance of some points of family history with which he should have been acquainted, and a certain bluster of manner, a sure sign of cowardice and ill assurance, had been all noted and put together by the good old clergyman, whose observation was sharpened by his indignation at the ill-treatment Robert Douglas had experienced. Cousin Sydney too, was very shy in his manner towards the divine, and had been caught by the latter, interrupting himself in—it *could* not be an oath, but it sounded very like one: and silly, silly Mrs. Furnival had pressed for no settlement on her daughter, although the wedding day was fixed,—“Cousin Sidney's honour! she was sure would do everything that was handsome, and *she* was not mercenary, thank Heaven!”

Mr. Evesham, I said, remarked all these extraordinary circumstances, and was haunted by the most restless suspicions;

and though often tempted to abandon his researches by an unwillingness to interfere or to pry into the concerns of others, he could not help returning again and again, under the panoply of his ecclesiastical character, to watch and consider, and to determine that Alice should have fair play. So came on the wedding-day, and, almost in a fever betwixt his fancies, that cousin Sydney was not what he should be, and his fears, lest he *might* prove a sound and veritable clergyman, he resolved on adopting the stratagem I have related;—it has been seen with what complete success. For the sake of the family, to whose good name it was of the utmost importance, that such a scandalous adventure should be concealed as much as possible, Barton was allowed to escape unpursued; and, I need hardly add, reappeared no more to claim his bride!

In spite of feeling how richly Mrs. Furnival's folly had merited chastisement, Mr. Evesham could not help pitying her bewilderment and horror, when the glaring fact was fully before her, that she had ruined the hopes of a faithful and talented man, for the sake of an adventurer. Her self reproach was indeed almost more than she could bear. So kind as she had been to him! and that he should turn out a traveller for a cutler's house, (for Rasp and Sharples, when written to, acknowledged the connexion, and expressed some surprise at Barton's non-appearance;) and the preparations which she had made, and the triumph with which she had trumpeted the match among their friends—were each of them, so many additional drops of gall in the cup of mortification! As for Alice she did not suffer a tithe of what her mother endured: she had been merely passive, and after a week's weeping, was ready for any other venture. Mrs. Furnival, however, smarted so bitterly under the consciousness of her own credulity, and fears of "the world's dread laugh," that she snatched at the pretext of Letty's ill health, let her house, sold her furniture, and removed "herself and flock" to Bath, there to begin anew the task of cultivating society and establishing her daughters.

My tale is not quite concluded. We must follow the steps of Robert Douglas, whose foreign travel was crowned with the double success of high advancement in his art, and the diversion of his mind from its regrets. We must not, indeed, tarry to count up the *studios* he visited, nor the pictures he painted; the cardinals who purchased them, or the *cognoscenti* who criticised them, but, skipping over the space of five years, restore the artist to his own country. It was on a certain fine morning in the month of June, that he stole into the exhibition room at Somerset House, and was listening as he passed, to the praises bestowed

by an admiring group, upon a splendid picture of Medea, after the murder of her children, whereupon he had expended many a day's thought and labour,—when he felt a light finger laid upon his arm. He turned round, and lo! Mrs. Furnival stood before him looking younger, livelier, and more gaily dressed than ever.

“Why, Mr. Douglas! how you stare? welcome back to old England again! I am heartily glad to see you!”

Resentment had long faded from his mind; and a “kent” face, and a cordial voice, are worth something to one who has been many years an exile. He shook the proffered hand heartily, “And how are you, Mrs. Furnival?”

“O Lord! well I declare!—how droll that I must tell you myself! Lady Dilton, if you please!—Sir Gabriel—”

A tall wizened man, curried by long exposure to a Bengal sun, obeyed her call.

“Sir Gabriel Dilton! this is my old friend Mr. Douglas, who painted—Ah, well! we will say nothing about old times!”

Sir Gabriel gave a grin, a scrape, and a chatter—then put up his glass, and screwed up his face again, and turned away to admire the Medea.

“O that splendid picture of yours! Sir Gabriel cannot take his eyes off it, and would buy it, I am sure, only we lead so unsettled a life, and it is rather too large to carry about. Carolina, this is your old friend Mr. Douglas.” Carolina had blown into a pale modish looking London girl.

Robert now thought it only civil to inquire after the other members of her family.

“Did you say Letty? why, where have you been, never to have heard of her marrying Sir Thomas Poltrot, my Sir Gabriel's first wife's brother. She is very well; they are down at Poltrot Place, in Northamptonshire.”

“And Miss Alice,” continued Douglas stoutly, “I hope she is well.”

“Ah, poor Alice! no! she has hardly had the luck of her sisters. Hester married the first;—it seems that I must tell you all the news,—and is now the Honorable Mrs. Sankey Smythe; she went with her husband to France, in the ambassador's suite. Poor Alice! Mr. Gillibrand left her a widow with two children, scarcely a year ago;—but Sir Gabriel, you must surely have had enough of that picture, unless you mean to eat it. You will dine with us to-morrow, Douglas, won't you? I assure you, I hear of nothing so much as your Medea. Come then, Sir Gabriel:—and do you go and see Pasta, it's her crack character,—go with us, we have a box.”

"Thank you, and where shall I hear of Mrs. Gillibrand?"

"You are very good, I will give you her direction to-morrow. We are living at No. 29, Chester Terrace, Regent's Park."

Douglas excused himself from the dinner, not a little amused at the extra coat of plating, which his old acquaintance's manners seemed to have received. She was now, obviously, in her own opinion, a woman of fashion, and he judged rightly in concluding that the Nabob must have had a double gilt bait, even to hook so willing a prey as herself.

But poor Alice! the merchant's widow, neglected by her foolish relations—Robert's heart yearned with compassion when he thought of her. Business, ere long, led him to his native town; and he lost no time in seeking her out. He found her in miserable lodgings, in a dull street, forsaken by all her former gay acquaintances, left in straitened circumstances, her beauty all gone, and her health entirely shattered. Her selfish mother and sisters whispered and laughed significantly when they heard of this visit, and thought that he would be infatuated enough to renew his old suit, and to invite her to share the competence, which he had now so fair a prospect of realizing.

They were, however, mistaken: his love had been too entirely eradicated ever to be cherished into life again. It is true that the meeting was full of embarrassment on both sides, and pain to one of the parties; but no allusion was made to their former compact. He spoke to her, as a friend who compassionated the desolateness of her situation: and if his kind words did kindle any fancies in her breast, it was but for a moment; for she was now experienced enough to read in his quiet demeanour and brotherly speech, that he had forgotten how to address her in the language of love. Her family had abandoned her to a hard strife with an unkind fortune—left her, a melancholy wreck of youth and gaiety. The sight stirred his indignation; she told him herself, with all the prolixity of disappointment, the conclusion of the story of the false Sydney, and how their real cousin never appeared, having written to them from Marseilles, within a few weeks after the detection of the counterfeit, to announce to his relations, that there was now little probability of their meeting soon. He had been summoned thither to attend the death bed of his tutor and guardian, and was now on the point of settling abroad for life, (further accounts added) with the purpose of marrying that tutor's orphan daughter. Upon hearing this unwelcome news, Mrs. Furnival had urged Alice to accept Mr. Gillibrand, who had given a most convincing proof of the strength of his regard by



following her to Bath to prefer his suit: and she, heart-sick and listless allowed herself to be persuaded into the match.

How little had she thought, in former days, that she should find the last solace of her life, in pouring out the tale of its griefs to her rejected lover! the only friend save good Mr. Evesham, who did not desert her, in her fallen fortunes. A fever, brought on by mortification of spirit and a long neglected cold, mercifully cut short her days; and her orphan children were, one of them claimed by Mr. Evesham,—for her heartless family allowed others to perform their duty—and the other, a little girl, the image of her mother, was adopted by Robert; who found in the care of her, and her grateful affection for the same, the pleasure of his life, and the joy of his old age.

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### THE STREETS—No. 3.

#### SOUNDS OF A SUMMER'S EVENING—SUNDAY IN TOWN.

THOSE, whose home is some quiet country retreat, some white cottage, for instance, with a high thatched roof, and small casement windows garlanded round with honey-suckles and roses, and, if the owner be a fancier of flowers, with one or two rarer creeping plants,—the parlours whereof overlook a lawn, shut out from the road by a rich screen of flowering shrubs, and evergreens, encroaching promontory-like upon the grass, and so tall, that, though the elms behind them are middle-aged well-grown trees, their transparent upper foliage is alone visible;—those, I say, who own such a tenement as this,—and, on some fresh May morning are cheered by the warble of spring birds, that clear juicy sound, so magical in dispelling any “shadow of annoyance,” who hear the merry breeze bearing its part in the concert, and the sound of the tiny feet of the choristers, as they alight on the narrow flagged terrace before the window—may well hug themselves in the possession of such luxuries, and compassionate the dwellers in a town, with its days of dust, and nights of noise;—and, if they have occasion to seek the city,—deafened by the ceaseless roll of wheels, the barbarous cries of the hawkers, and the nasal song of the ballad-monger—may be excused if they fret and long for the delicious, but not soundless quiet of their fair homes. For even the veriest town bird, whose heart is with his treasure, will, at

times, sicken as with a calenture for the repose and balminess of a night in the country; and if, like myself, he have passed entire summers, and scarcely seen a rose on its bush, or heard the reviving sound of running water,—if he be one to whom the calendar of flowers is a sealed book, and the feeling of fresh grass under foot almost forgotten,—he may be forgiven if,—on some sultry evening of June, when he has not the heart to stir abroad, and the measured tramp of feet upon the burning pavement, and the glare reflected from the window-panes on the opposite side of the street, break in, perforce, upon his retirement—he gave way to a temporary despondency and discontent, and vent his yearnings somewhat after this fashion,

O summer air !  
 Thou dost on thy pinions bear  
 Murmurs from deep woods, and strains  
 Brooks have taught thee, on the plains  
 Where didst fly on golden wing  
 Balm and music gathering;  
 Why—when green fields wooed thy stay,  
 And thy call did flowers obey,  
 Springing up beneath thy feet,  
 Bright and plentiful and sweet,  
 Comest thou here?—O spirit rare !  
 What hast thou to do with care,  
 Soft summer air ?

Thou knowest nought  
 Of days, wherein the hand hath wrought  
 From the dawning, until night  
 Sets the taper's fire a-light;  
 For the bee, that busy one,  
 Ends his toil, when sinks the sun,  
 And their wings the wood-birds fold,  
 Ere the west hath lost its gold,  
 Wilt thou leave then, hive and tree,  
 Where thy playmates sleeping be,  
 To come to me?

Thou knowest nought  
 Of treasure by the watcher sought;  
 If of gold thou dreamest indeed,  
 'Tis of king-cups on the mead;  
 If of pearls—it is the dew;  
 If of sapphires—violets blue;  
 Nor their wealth thou needs must seek  
 With tired hand and pallid cheek,

Like his, whose cell thou enterest now,  
And breathest round his burning brow  
Thy music low.

Then go thou back  
Upon thy glowing joyous track ;—  
To me thou dost too sadly tell  
Of haunts in boyhood loved so well ;  
Lonely valley, dim and cool,  
Glassy, water-lilled pool,  
Rich turf carpet under trees  
White with wood anemonies ;—  
O to wander there again !—  
Go !—thou canst not melt my chain !  
Nor the heart-sick captive bear  
To his home, so far, so fair !  
Soft summer air !—

Yes—after a long day's toil at the desk, a summer evening, spent in town, is a dismal thing ; especially if you have to go so far to seek for fresh fields and hanging trees, that their distance discourages you, when jaded and out of spirits, from making the attempt. At such a time, all the advantages, all the privileges, to be enjoyed only in a city,—its temptations to active exertion, the superiority of its society—are forgotten or undervalued : and the old innocent love of Nature seems to inundate the mind with a flood of yearnings and reminiscences, not to be withstood by reason—or gainsayed by worldly wisdom. Then the weary one looks back with inexpressible tenderness towards the days, when the first sight of the ocean was an excitement almost too great to be borne ; when the child stole out at night-fall to watch the moon rising round above the cottage roof and the brown wood beyond, and danced with delight on finding the silver bell of the first snow-drop upon the stained grass-plot, or in the dark garden bed. Then self-reproach grows busy, and paints that child as he is now, sophisticated by his intercourse with the world ;—counts up a long catalogue of pure feelings vitiated, of right principles distorted, and truths sneered as it were into the lumber corners of the heart—and the man, ashamed and sad-hearted, contemplates the doleful picture which she has drawn, till he forgets that it is possible she *may* in the warmth of the moment, have been a little unjust, a little intolerant, that she *may* have drawn the least in the world of a caricature of the evils of a city life, without showing any of its good, even in the back ground.

But if to such fatigue of body, and mournfulness of spirit, be

added the further trial of feeble health, how immense, at such a time, appears the pre-eminence of the country over the town in the eyes of the fastidious invalid; who imagines that it is quiet, and its purity, and its leafiness would work an immediate cure—bring coolness to his feverish head, and sleep to the eyes that ache with wakefulness. If he be sofa-ridden, he tantalizes himself with thinking how he might be wheeled to some open window, overlooking a flower-garden or a field;—and cheat time of its weariness by watching the wind swaying the meadow-waves of rich and fragrant clover, or the sun lighting on some blossomy spot of peculiar richness in the parterre:—to say nothing of the gambols of birds, bees, and butterflies. He could breathe the fresh air—unloaded by dust, unpolluted by evil odours: and should he have reached so miserable a pitch of sensitiveness as to be wearied by the worky-day sounds of common life, he knows that there, and there only, he could enjoy the luxury of one day of *perfect rest* out of the seven, one period of morning and evening whose passage is alone marked by the sound of church bells softened by distance. O the weariness of a Sunday in town! when you would give a fortune if you had it, to purchase an escape from the perpetual jangle of chimes, and the noise of the gay holiday groups who pass your window without ceasing, from morning till night, and the stream of whose talk is never still! The activity of the week has now merged in gaudy pleasure-taking;—the street beneath you is a constant phantasmagoria, in which almost every puppet is animated by the same spirit of conversation and finery—O the weariness of a Sunday in town!

“Patience!” whispers a gentle voice, close to the ear, “you must surely be bilious, to speak of the world without in such a railing and uncharitable tone! You have forgotten how many hearts are gladdened by the sunshine of this glorious evening,—how many busy ones there are, who to-day leave their looms and forges, and lock up their houses, and come abroad to stretch their limbs, and breathe the fresh air! You forget the cellar-dwellings in close dingy streets, where the sun shines so very scantily, and a flower was never seen: the dusty noisome garrets, where pale men and women ply some sedentary trade to minister to your luxury—and defraud themselves of their just portion of natural rest, that your fancy might not be disappointed by one hour. You forget the estate of hard working servants hurried to and fro, from Monday morning to Saturday night, by the half dozen caprices of as many masters—of weary clerks and porters, who have been broiled in the sun, or withered by the bitter wind, by the side

of some dock, or have been bowing themselves into a consumption over some ponderous ledger. Remember all or any of these things, Sir Hypochondriac, and be patient with the relaxation of this holiday, if you cannot be indulgent."

Some such considerations as these may smooth the hours of the invalid's town Sunday, even should his irritable spirit be rebuked by no higher thoughts than those of his reasonable benevolence. But then, again, Fancy, often busy to contrive mischief, sets forth in quest of others, like himself, imprisoned—and extends its sympathy upon their desolate captivity. I shall never forget the pale face of a poor young fellow, whom I used to pass every day for many weeks, and whose constant position at the same window, dressed in the same *déshabille* of loose cravat, and gray dressing gown, told a woful tale of bad health, abandonment by his friends, and a lack of pursuit and occupation. It was a face which spoke of nothing more than of melancholy and ennui;—give it colour and life, and you could fancy such an one surmounting the shoulders of some Jehu, famous for the taming of restive horses, or shining out in full glory, beneath the shelter of a neat jockey cap. I was sure that the tenant of No. 23, — street, must be country born. I had once assigned his *triste* look to a man of business, who was pining for his ledger and circulars; but there was not calculation in the eyes to fulfil the character: and a country gentleman I accordingly resolved that he *must* be;—and pitied him accordingly, as evening after evening, I watched him looking more and more wo-begone: a sort of melancholy centre, round whom street vagabonds swarmed, for whom dancing-dogs skipped their painful dances, and hurdy-gurdies droned out their most favourite, *ergo* most hackneyed airs. At last I missed him—whether his doctor had dismissed him to health, or the church-yard, I never could discover—I suspect the latter: and have been sometimes pricked by conscience, that I did not once break through the ordinances of ceremony, and offer my own poor powers of entertainment, in default of better, to the deserted being whose confinement bore so heavily upon him. What a long chapter, of such good intentions which come too late to be of any use, would every honest man's diary supply!

But if we carry the invalid one step out of his chamber, our discontent at the bustle and publicity of the streets of a large town, reaches its zenith. What can be more miserable to the frail creature full of the fancies of convalescence, who would like to step out upon a lawn a hundred times a day, than hot flags and inquisitive passers by:—who, as they take the measure of his crutch, and stare at his haggard face, shake their

heads and say aloud—"Ah! poor young man! he'll never get over this!" What agony is more desperate than is awakened by the sight of some well known bore and button holder coming deliberately towards you, and, as he comes, fixing his eyes steadily upon you all the while, as though he had hardly confidence in your feebleness rendering you his sure prey—some person curious in sick rooms, and minute in the chapter of operations; who can talk by the hour of every malady under the sun, "and has the misfortune to belong to the most delicate family in all —shire!" And to know that there is no hope of escaping the friendly inquiries and condolences of such an individual;—to watch his out-spread hand—his lips already framing a question,—why, it is as bad as marking the approach of a cloud of dust which is to stifle you; or, on some broiling day of June, seeing some seven straight shadowless miles of road before you, which, you have the satisfaction of knowing, that you needs must travel over on the top of a slow stage coach.

But the soft voice speaks again—and would stop our querulousness by recalling the thousand alleviations to the sufferings and weariness of sickness, which are in the reach of the town invalid alone. It counts up the momentary caprices gratified as soon as formed; the treasures of books brought in daily variety to the sufferer's couch; it pictures, in pleasant language, the faces of friends who looked in upon us every morning with soft steps and words of cheer, and news enough of the outer world, to keep our sympathies alive, without making us ready to expire with envy. How delightful are such tokens of kindly remembrance!—how sweetly did the sense that we were not forgotten neutralize the bitterness of repining, that others were abroad acting and enjoying things in which we might not hope to share;—how eagerly did we count the moments till we should hear their welcome feet upon the stairs again!—how gratefully do we appreciate the delicacy that restrained the exuberance of their spirits as they sat beside us!—Let us leave the invalid in this better mood of mind.

Our sea-port town is kept alive, at this season, by none of that gaiety which, in the metropolis, fashion and parliament protract from March till mid-summer. Strange as is the mixture of winter amusements with summer temperature,—strange as it is to see, as I have seen, the astonished setting sun flaring in among the foot lights and chandeliers of the opera house, the loneliness of a town forsaken in summer, as a residence, by all the free parts of its inhabitants who love to exchange their close mansions for the farm-house in the midst of

its garden, or the cottage on the sea-shore, is, to my thinking, infinitely more grievous than this forgetting of the seasons. For my part, (although I know I am making an avowal which some will call selfish), as my lot is cast in a town, I would gladly not be reminded of another state of being; I would fain, if possible, bar out such discontented consciousness of imprisonment as is awakened by letters received from parties gone to pleasure themselves among the wild scenery of the Highlands, or the rich variety of Devonshire—every paragraph whereof glows with renovated health and excited spirits—or by the doleful visions of houses shut up, of empty streets and abandoned squares, in which the foot of the dull barrel organist is alone heard as he plods his rounds; grinding as he goes some drowsy tune made hateful by long repetition, in the vain hope of gleaning his old harvest of coppers from “the young ladies and gentlemen” in the balconies. The market dressed up with bouquets of flowers and baskets of fruit reminds us sadly enough that the earth is teeming with beauty which our eyes are not to behold, without the further mementos of silence and neglect, in places where lately was heard the laugh of children, the hum of men, and the thousand other evidences of “something going on.”

It is at this melancholy time, of all others, that the hermit's ear becomes alive to the sounds of the streets; that he learns to distinguish the diapason of one hurdy-gurdy from that of another, and the *cadenzas* of a broom-girl from those of her rival. The whole family of street cries now becomes particularly odious; the voice of the purchaser of rags, who can hold the same note from one end of a long street to the other—the barbarous shouts of fruit women and fish wives, are aggravated into nuisances which can hardly be endured. And, in the midst of all this disgust, what associations are ever and anon wakened by street music! Lord Byron broke off one of his delightful letters—to listen to a waltz played in the street beneath his window, for the tune recalled him to the past enjoyments and scenes of a London season, during which the melody had been a favorite—and only adds—“Music is a strange thing!” Again, in the Diary of an *Ennuyée*, how touching is the passage which describes her listening to “Di Piacer” ground out of a wretched hand organ beneath the windows of her hotel at (I think) Marseilles, and remembering the brilliant scene where she first heard that triumphant melody,—where she was all light-hearted and full of hope, and he perhaps at her side, for the love of whom she was now mournfully wasting away! How touching are these traits of real life and fiction!—the

stern seared-hearted poet, turning aside in the midst of his storm and sarcasm to remember the past, half with regret, half with disdain;—and the desolation of the broken-hearted girl, whom the strain sadly reminds that she must hope for nothing but rest in the grave!

How often, indeed, has some familiar air, the “Una Volta” from *La Cenerentola*, or “Durandante e Belerma,” or some yet simpler tune, carried us back to the voice and guitar from which we first heard it, and charmed our exhausted feelings with tender remembrances and agreeable visions. And if we look out, to bestow a penny upon the itinerants who have thus, for a moment, transported us back into fairy land,—how does the sight of the gaunt listless figure of the musician, or of the southern complexion and haggard features of his wife, set off by her fantastic head-gear, with a little child at her side, bearing, poor thing! a tambourine, or leading in a string a doleful looking dog in a masquerade dress—how does such a group as this move our heart with a strange pity for those who wander from their own bright lands, and, amid toil and degradation, endeavour to pick up a pittance wherewith to purchase a noon’s meal and a night’s lodging! I shall never forget the feelings of this nature excited in my mind, by hearing the Tyrolese minstrels for the first time, one sultry evening in August. It was their third visit to this place; our grandees were either absent from town, or had satiated their curiosity; the concert room therefore was indifferently filled with a third rate audience; and before them, and exposed to the full fire of their vulgar remarks, stood these mountain children pouring out the melodies of their own land, every tone of which, one would have thought, must have spoken to them of their glorious Alpine landscapes:—with snow peaks in the distance, and in the fore-ground green meadows and substantial farm-houses, comely cows, and cherry trees crushed down by their weight of fruit. It may be that custom had deadened their remembrance, or that the hope of a return to these sweet native scenes sustained them; but upon me their singing had a saddening effect, which I could not cast aside for many days, and which wrought itself off in a strain of verses, of which the two following perhaps are the best.

Did not your snow-crowned mountains seem  
To Heaven yet nearer than before?  
Did you not—when you left them—deem  
The voice of every bird and stream  
Was sweeter than of yore?  
The sky was brighter than of old,  
The lakes more clear, the woods more green?—



Did not the sunset seem to fold  
 The earth in robe of richest gold  
     That ever eye had seen ?  
 And you could leave so fair a clime !  
 Perchance 'twas in the summer time  
 You looked your last—O simple ones !  
 The mountain patriarchs' wandering sons,  
 How can you sing their songs, and bear  
 Afar to breathe the stranger's air ?  
     \*      \*      \*      \*      \*

And you—ye wake a thought of pain  
     Which turns mine eyes to earth,—I see  
 How one stern despot, sordid gain,  
 Bows to his mercenary reign  
     The men of low degree.  
 And they must toil before his throne  
     To his harsh mandate bending low,  
 Till age has with its silver strown  
 Their clustering locks—and time has thrown  
     His wrinkles o'er the brow.  
 And you must come from lands afar,  
 And yoked to his triumphal car,  
 Breathe out your simple mountain songs  
 To heartless ears and critic throngs,  
 Who know not, heed not how ye yearn,  
 To your own vallies to return !

But we must not end in this pensive mood. Let us think how pleasant it is to hear,—as we sit with opened windows, to catch the cool night breeze—some chord of men's voices passing along the street, and dying away with that peculiar delicacy which the open air imparts to the coarsest musical sound ; let us recall the delight excited by hearing two harps suddenly strike up, played in such entire concord and perfect time, that it was next to impossible to refrain from acknowledging their influence with our feet, in spite of the fever heat of the air and the weariness of our limbs ; let us make ourselves merry with remembering the grotesque tunes which herald a peculiar Punch of our acquaintance, tempting the old and utilitarian to look out and laugh at the lawless doings of that independent, though not very respectable character ;—and if none of these will avail—let us turn round to the pianoforte, and listen to a voice, clear as a silver bell, and gay as a lark's—singing a ballad by that best of all modern songsters, Barry Cornwall, whose cheering *refrain* is :

“—’Tis better we laugh than weep.”

## THE MISSIONARY AND THE ACTRESS.

A TALE.

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### PART I.

#### THE ADOPTED CHILDREN.

"She—O Susannah!—to this world belongs!"

CRADBE.

To those who love to contemplate variety, and are more desirous in their intercourse with the world, to meet with difference of character than uniformity of creed, it will be often a cause of regret, that sectarian prejudices shut up entire classes within barriers as strong as those that enclose the Hebrew quarter of many continental towns: that the Church, as it were, holds up the hem of her garment to avoid touching the robe of the Tabernacle, and that the Chapel sits apart and vents her sarcasms on the bigotry and priestcraft of the Church. It is provoking to think how much character and intelligence there must exist in a large town like ours, of which we may hardly hope to obtain a peep.

Yet sometimes the veil is drawn aside, by some stray sheep who breaks out of the charmed fold and proclaims to the world round about the peculiarities of the flock which he has left:—and the documents issued by the various bodies of religionists—the Arminian magazine of the Methodists, the Eclectic and Imperial of the Independents, and other periodicals of a similar kind,—these also throw light upon those singularities of thought and cast of mind, induced by dwelling for the most part "among one's own people." It was in the course of my wanderings hither and thither upon the outskirts of certain sects, aided by communications from other borderers like myself, that I became acquainted with the following circumstances belonging to the history of a family, so dispersed or

destroyed, that I run no risk of hurting the feelings of any one by bringing them before the public.

Possibly there never appeared in our sea-port town two more perfect specimens of the dissenter than John Lambwood and Esther his wife. Both were zealously attached to their own particular congregation; and yet the religion of the one and its effects differed as widely from those of the other, as if they had belonged to different churches. He was cold, inflexible, upright and reasoning: she was equally strict,—but warm, devoted, a little superstitious, sometimes more than a little passionate. Some evil disposed neighbour had once called them Hot and Cold; and it was remarked that, though they were agreed at heart, as if they had been fashioned of the same handful of clay,—when they were together, he hardly ever advanced a fact, which she did not dispute lovingly though earnestly; and she scarcely broached one opinion which he did not make haste to qualify or generalize. They were proud of the situation which they occupied in their own church;—both a little impatient under a dispensation which denied to their union the blessing of children. It chanced however, that when they had passed the middle period of life, this want was in some measure supplied by a circumstance which consigned two children—a boy and a girl—to their care.

It is a great mistake to limit the existence of romance of mind to those to whom the entire world of fiction and art is open, whose thoughts are free to range whithersoever they please. There is always abroad upon the earth a certain quantity of that high and pure spirit which has made poets, painters and sculptors; and though æras and circumstances may refuse to develop it in that form in which men call it genius, it may be distinctly recognised by the advertent under its other manifestations. And among those sects who denounce the region of beauty and imagination as a place of snares and seductions not to be trodden by Christian feet, that spirit sends those fervent promptings and visions which excite men to the daring and endurance of missionary labours; it joins the delights of enterprise, the charms which sacrifice possesses to the ardent mind, (the same which have upheld so many amid the torments of martyrdom,) to the severe sense of duty. But, to my story—There were resident in our town, at the period to which it refers, a young clergyman and his wife, whose united ages hardly amounted to five and forty years, who were bent upon the then strange and almost perilous adventure of penetrating to the remote parts of Hindostan, for the purpose of preaching the gospel there.

William Grafton and his wife Sarah “were,” as their own

church records set forth, "a remarkable pair." Both country born and country bred, they had been attached to each other ever since early childhood, with a purity and fervency of love, which, some hold, has altogether disappeared in these latter days. Their parents lived in a remote part of the county of York; a district full of yeomen's grey stone houses, set among orchards, with here and there an ancient yew tree thrusting out its dark head among the blossoming branches of the fruit trees, and fragments of ruin startling you with their serene decay in the midst of rich meadows—a country, in short, were there was quite enough to kindle the fancy and to impress a ready spirit with that most earnest and delicious of all desires—of a close communion with nature and its maker. Now the young lovers were endowed with warm feelings and active imaginations; though educated in such strictness that they were hardly aware of their possession. Instead of books of poetry, they went out and read the sky together; instead of legends they studied the two misshapen and headless statues which lay prostrate among the holly trees in farmer Grafton's east meadow: and this union of their sympathies and interests drew them so closely together, that when he was no older than twenty-one and she than eighteen, they overcame the scruples of cautious relations, and were united—for better for worse.

William Grafton had always been dedicated to the ministry, as much of his own contemplative turn of mind as by his father's purpose. He had already frequently preached in the open air among his own country folke, and assisted in the services of the nearest chapel of his sect. There was not much difficulty then, as his character was blameless, in procuring for him an appointment as pastor to a small congregation in our town. A happier pair than he and his young wife never crossed its boundaries; the same freshness of spirit which they had nurtured among their native scenery, accompanied them through the bustle and novelty of a city life; and for awhile made the very change pleasant. They were beloved by all who knew them; Mrs. Grafton within the three first years of her married life, gave birth to a son and daughter; and was renowned as the most devoted wife, the kindest hearted neighbour, and the most fortunate mother in all the congregation.

And yet, at this very time, the young couple were separately bending their thoughts towards a project which was to separate them at once and for ever from their present happy and useful estate. This was nothing short of undertaking a mission to the remoter parts of India. Their desires grew up secretly; the enchantment of a wish to wander had insinuated itself into both

their hearts;—mostly into the man's, for the *mother* knew that if their purpose was to be executed it was imperatively necessary for her to resign the guardianship of her infant children into other hands. It was a hard struggle,—but enthusiasm gained the victory, and became ere long a sense of duty. When once they had opened their minds to each other—struck by the coincidence of their aspirations, their purposes acquired such strength by union, that no obstacle was mighty enough to prevent their fulfilment. In short, they laid the call which they had received before the elders of their congregation; and were listened to with the utmost sympathy and such reverence as attends those, who are willing to make sacrifice of some precious thing, because they believe it to be right so to do. Not a voice opposed them, though many sighed to lose their faithful pastor and his beloved wife; and they departed under the auspices of their own missionary society—having left, (it may be imagined with how many tears, prayers and last embraces,) their children to the care of those two discreet relatives of Mrs. Grafton, who had eagerly desired to be allowed to undertake the trust.

It was a sabbath evening. John Lambwood and his wife, now grown old though not infirm, having attended the services of the day and assembled their household for family worship, were sitting together as it was their custom to do for an hour, previous to retiring for the night. They were, both of them, more than commonly grave and silent. A large open bible was laid upon the table before them, but neither of the two had as yet looked into it; the eyes of the husband were fixed upon a profile likeness of Mrs. Grafton which hung above the chimney piece, it was faded—so many years had elapsed since the original had left England—those of the wife were bent upon his face, as if she would gather his thoughts from his countenance without inquiry. At last the old man broke the long silence, and sighing deeply said: "Our dear sister little knew"—and paused.

Mrs. Lambwood quietly opened the book and read: *If any man come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. And again: He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.* "Our dear sister," continued she, "when she entered upon her appointed work, did utterly resign the care of these children into our hands, and we must not become weary of it, nor murmur at the crosses which appertain to it. We have perhaps desired too ardently the bless-

ing of children, and Providence is reproving us in this very thing."

"I will use the authority of a father over her," replied her husband; "but what hath it availed hitherto? the girl is of a light and worldly spirit: nay, and I think it increases with her years. Thou wert wrong to permit that intimacy with the Worralls. I will have it broken off at once and decidedly; thou hast been too tender with her, because she is beautiful."

"And full of understanding also," interposed Mrs. Lamb-wood, with something near akin to the eagerness of maternal pride.

"Ay—that understanding hath been allowed undue latitude. These idle poetry books, this Cowper, this Pope, I will allow no more of them; my love, liberality is not conformity to this world's frivolity."

"And yet," ventured his wife, "her brother has been allowed the same liberty, and thou seest how different he is: this must be diversity of natural character, for thou wilt not allow him to be inferior to her in capacity."

"I am amazed at thy pleading, Esther; thou wouldst absolutely excuse Theresa's levity; thou hast made her anxious after dress too."

"I, John?" replied the matron quickly, looking down upon her own sober and unornamented costume, "The child has walked in the streets and seen gay clothes—I have done no more; and she is a good child, John, though a little wilful."

"She has a lively tongue, I know; but she has used it to sneer at Thomas Proudfoot, and the good young man has taken it much to heart."

"Well, my dear thou wouldst not force her inclinations."

"Esther, what are her inclinations?—towards the world and the things of the world; it is her nature to take pattern by any foolishness she sees; during that unlucky six months when she was at school, there was more harm done than will be ever undone, except—and with him there is nothing impossible!—but I will be stricter with her than I have been. I believe that we shall hear nothing more of her parents,—whether they yet live or not. I will take up a father's authority at once."

"And yet, John, consider the evil that may accrue from over much severity."

"Severity, wife! thou too art growing latitudinarian?"

"I feel towards her like a mother," replied Esther earnestly; "she has never been allowed many indulgences; and accepting this acquaintance with the Worralls, her own blood re-

lations, I know not what we could take away; and if we were to forbid her from going to see them, it might I fear increase her already strong hankering after gay company; and she looks delicate just now;—let us wait a little.”

“I am not accustomed to interfere with thee, Esther; but in this thou art too remiss. I will have her dressed in a simpler fashion.”

“That cannot be: the colour and fashion of her clothes is precisely the same as my own: but Providence has given her a slender waist and low shoulders, and the simplest dress becomes her. She is very beautiful, John!”

“Her beauty is a snare to her,” replied her husband, surprised and displeased at his wife’s pertinacity, “but from this night forward, I will be more watchful over her, and I will speak to Reuben, that he also may give her counsel.”

“Do not, my dear John,—do not, I entreat thee, my dear husband! They love one another, and it is enough; he will have no influence over her; thou knowest he is so impetuous, and she has by much the readier wit. Nay, do not: let us not run the risk of weakening their affection by setting him over her. I will talk to her very gravely myself, and insist upon a sober demeanour, and take away from her her poetry books, and prevent her from going to the Worralls, as much as I can: but I pray thee, leave her in my hands a little longer.”

“Well, Esther, well,” said her husband appeased by the ready compliance with his wishes, which invariably terminated every matrimonial debate: “I will try a little longer; but as the father of a family and the elder of a congregation, I cannot allow such idle practices any longer. It has been already declared, and I am sorry, with so much cause, that I kept no order at home. Let us go to rest and pray that Theresa may be endowed with a greater measure of solidity of mind: trusting, that in due season, our prayers will be fulfilled.”

Little dreamed Theresa that night of the increasing strictness towards her, which her guardians were meditating;—and yet, to call those things indulgences in which she was to be stinted, would raise a smile on the face of any, save those who have been familiar with the strict household discipline of certain religious bodies. They amounted, as far as Mrs. Lambwood knew, to a great liveliness of talk, a neatness of attire which made her unfashionable costume appear becoming to her faultless figure and striking face, and a decided rejection of the distasteful courtship of Thomas Proudfoot. As for Theresa’s intercourse with the Worralls—they were nearly related to her father; and Mrs. Lambwood felt that she had no right to prevent

the portionless girl from creating for herself an interest in the minds of her rich and liberal kindred. But she was totally ignorant of much that passed in the mind of her adopted daughter; and had she been made acquainted with Theresa's thoughts, could not in the least have understood their nature. The maiden was gifted with a generous and bold spirit—and a certain irregularity and originality of mind, corresponding with her cast of features, which were fascinating, though in some points, exceeding the strict proportions of beauty. Though she had been early taught to regard Mr. and Mrs. Lambwood as father and mother, on the plea that her own parents would never return to England, and that, in fact, the silence of many years made the resignation to their natural authority complete, and though she loved them well—she almost as early learned to obey them with a reserve such as no child should keep from its parents—and these every day increased in number, as few and far-between glimpses of the outer world enlarged her desires and made her sensible of the narrowness of the boundaries within which she had been educated. There is a pleasure particularly flattering to the vanity, in opening the eyes of the uninstructed—and those who are willing to see, through howsoever small a cranny they have leave to peep, need never remain in ignorance of the world around them. During a period of illness, when Mrs. Lambwood had been ordered into the country, for the benefit of change of air, Theresa had been left at a school recommended by serious people. Music and dancing, however, were taught to a few; and Shakspeare was to be found in the private book-case of the English teacher. Theresa ere long acquired a relish for all three—for the last in particular; and her occasional visits to the Worralls, a gay, careless family, who had recently come into the possession of a handsome income, and though complaisant towards their friends' scruples, were troubled by few of their own—kept alive and nourished this taste for forbidden pleasure. Many an hour of reading did the delighted girl steal in the library, when she found the family from home; many a hint as to the minor ordinances of dress did her quick eye gather up; and, as her mind became daily more and more enfranchised and her taste improved, her demeanour naturally assumed that increased freedom, which had given Thomas Proudfoot so much offence, and through him her foster-father. She was now nineteen years of age and could no longer be chidden as a child; and yet, unless some decided step was taken, it was too probable that ere long, she would break the prescribed bounds of the strict household wherein she dwelt, in some open and daring manner.



On the Monday evening after this conversation which I have recorded took place, Mrs. Lambwood was perplexed by meeting Theresa on the stairs, dressed in the utmost gaiety to which she could attain. "Thou art not going out, my love?" said she, in an interrogatory voice.

"O yes, mother, I am—I promised to spend this evening with the Worralls, if I could...."

"Thou shouldst have told me earlier."

"And why, dear mother?—I was not sure myself whether I should be able; but I got up at six o'clock this morning, and my father's cravats are all finished."

"Why—Theresa!"

"Every one of them, mother; and marked, and laid upon his dressing table; and I have heard poor little Ruth all her lessons—and read my fifty pages of history,"—and she might have added, her twenty pages of "As you like it" from a precious volume which nestled among her discarded muslins,—“so that I think I have fairly earned a right to take a little pleasure this evening.”

"Pleasure?" replied her mother gravely; "thou art too eager after pleasure! and thy father thinks that I have permitted thee in too much liberty."

"Nay, mother,—if you only knew...." she checked herself, wisely remembering that Mrs. Lambwood never admitted the validity of an appeal to any standard save her own;—"but I must go, I am already late: you will send Reuben for me at the usual time."—And ere Mrs. Lambwood could recover from her astonishment at the good humoured independence of Theresa's manner, or utter any further remonstrance, that maiden was already many steps beyond the hall-door, on her way to the Worralls'.

Another guest had arrived there before her; a strange gentleman from the west of England, a friend of Colonel Worrall, her host's nephew. Theresa was always welcome to the gay young people of the house, if only because, as they said, "they loved to laugh the starch out of her." "Here she is," cried Lucy Worrall, running up to her eagerly, and kissing her. "Here she is at last!—Mr. Talbois, this is our cousin, Miss Grafton."

The gentleman, a plain but distinguished looking man of some twenty-three years old or thereabouts, raised his head languidly from his book, to acknowledge the introduction;—raised it—but did not bend it down, after he had once looked upon the new comer. Theresa was tall, but so perfectly formed and her figure of such an exquisite roundness, that she could in no wise be charged with awkwardness; her complexion was pure and

dazzling; her hair as rich and profuse as that of Titian's mistress, though unlike its far-famed tresses, as black and bright as jet. She was dressed in a gown of very pale drab silk, its very plainness making the perfect symmetry of her form more apparent; one rosebud was placed in her belt, and over her shoulders she wore a large transparent muslin handkerchief crossed in front, and pinned so high as to disclose nothing below her throat. Her hair, not permitted the ornament of curl or plait, was simply braided and twisted up behind; but it grew so thick and long, that there was no preventing its forming a natural coronet. There was a bright piquant smile upon her brilliant lips, (detractors denounced her mouth as being too wide,) a novelty in her expressions, and a simplicity in her manners, which went direct to the heart, gained entrance there, and kept possession.

"Come here, Theresa," cried Lucy Worrall gaily, "come here! look what Mr. Talbois has brought us!" and she drew her guest close to the table which was spread with splendid wreaths of feather flowers, at that time a rarity in England. "Are they not magnificent? The scarlet one is for me, and the gold-colour and green is for Susan; are they not wonderfully natural!"

"And how deliciously perfumed!" said Theresa, taking up a garland of delicate pink blossoms.

"I declare, Theresa, you have the gayest taste of us all!" exclaimed Lucy; and before she could utter a "don't," her nimble friend had twined the long spray round her head, and was forcing her towards a large looking-glass.—Mr. Talbois appeared much amused by the scene—and Susan Worrall stooping, said in a low voice: "She is a Baptist—and O, so strictly brought up!—You know they are not allowed to wear any ornaments."

But her communication was lost upon the gentleman whose eye was fixed upon the maiden at the mirror. In the first moment of delight, she exclaimed eagerly "O how beautiful!"—in the second, she became, for the first time in her life, aware that the words might be applied to the wearer, as well as the wreath. As this sudden consciousness burst upon her mind, an intense blush rose to her very temples, and hastening from before the glass, she cried out eagerly: "O take them off! O pray take them off!"

"Not I indeed! nay you shall wear them all the evening, should she not, Mr. Talbois?" and then she held up her forefinger menacingly, in an attitude which said: "you must not ell."

"Indeed," replied the gentleman very gallantly, with a polished composure of manner entirely new to the unpractised Theresa, "Sister Anne, of the Flower Convent whence these came must have been favoured with some particular dream or revelation of Miss Grafton, when she was making this coronal: it seems to grow upon your head so naturally;—I hope you believe in dreams?"

"O yes! I would not disbelieve in them for the world!"

"You are strangely behind the fashion," said her new acquaintance, in a tone of gentle irony: "and, I am afraid, dangerous company."

"Dangerous, Sir?" replied Theresa simply.

"Ay—dangerous in these days when it is considered a merit to get rid of all old-fashioned notions and prepossessions—when a person who produces a ghost story in society is ridiculed—when Spenser is so entirely laid on the shelf—and Shakespeare only tolerated for the sake of Mrs. Siddons."

"O, Mrs. Siddons!" cried Susan Worrall starting up eagerly, and clasping her hands: "take care what you are about, Mr. Talbois!"

"Where is Mrs. Worrall?" asked Theresa, just sufficiently well versed in the world's wisdom to remember that it was not correct to be *too much* pleased with any one at a first interview.

"Papa and mamma are out of town for a day or two," replied Lucy archly: "and here comes Robert!—Well—"

"Come away, young ladies!" cried her brother gaily, "the coach is at the door. Come, Theresa, for a drive! I declare, Talbois, my sisters have not been slow in doing honour to your present."

Robert was silenced by a significant look from Lucy; but Theresa, remembering herself stopped suddenly—"O stay one moment, pray stay! let me take these off before I go down into the street!"

But the others were already half way down stairs. Mr. Talbois who had eagerly stepped forward and offered his arm, did not appear to hear the exclamation; and was saying something so elegant and amusing about the convenience of wide old-fashioned stair-cases, and in particular about the magnificence of a certain flight of steps in the Vatican, down which he had seen the Pope and Cardinals descend in grand procession, that Theresa forgot her discomposure, and in another instant was shut up in the coach with the gentleman at her side.

It was a lovely spring evening—and as the Worralls were often accustomed to take a drive after their very early tea, (remember, fastidious reader, my tale goes back thirty years,) it

never occurred to Theresa to inquire which way they were going : nor was she disengaged enough to look out, so much delighted was she with her companion's lively and entertaining conversation, until the carriage stopped suddenly.

"Why—what is this?—what is the matter?"—inquired she eagerly—"such a crowd of carriages!—and they are opening the door!—Lucy—Susan" they were already out, and Mr. Talbois' hand extended to assist her to alight.

Theresa was too completely taken by surprise to have time to divine the cause of this stoppage. In another instant, her conductor had led her into the midst of a crowd of people, all looking their best, in gay evening dresses. The liveliness of the scene enchanted her, though she was utterly bewildered by its novelty, and grasping Mr. Talbois' arm suddenly, she exclaimed : "O, Sir—tell me—where are we?"

"Did you never see Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth?"

Theresa absolutely grew sick with astonishment and that choking feeling which always attends any high degree of new excitement! On the stairs—within a few moments of seeing a play—a play of Shakspeare's—acted by Mrs. Siddons—it was almost too great a joy to bear and keep her reason! and helpless with the extreme of delight and anticipation, she suffered herself to be conducted to her place in the front of one of the boxes near the stage. The house was rapidly filling. Long files of ladies sumptuously dressed, with glittering ornaments and waving feathers, fell into their appointed seats with an ease and absence of astonishment surprising to our heroine, who was too much wrapt up in the novelty of the scene before her, even to attend to her esquire, while he, seated between herself and Lucy Worrall, to whom this frolic was by no means the first of its kind, was pouring out an infinity of gay and sarcastic remarks upon the house and company, which at another time would have afforded the utmost amusement to his absorbed neighbour.

The orchestra began to play an overture. Bad as was our provincial music then—bad as it is now—the first sound of full instrumental harmony produces an effect upon those, "who have music in their souls," at once delightful and troubling : an effect which is never to be forgotten. It is like one of those vague and delicious pleasures of childhood which are enjoyed all the more, because reason and criticism enter not into the enjoyment. My own first experience of orchestral music was Mozart's Jupiter symphony; and I can compare the feelings of pleasure it awakened in myself, to none other than those produced by the first sight of the open sea;—and as I think of

them, grow melancholy from the thought the same intense sensation of wonder and delight can never be enjoyed again!

But when the curtain rose and the tragedy began, what a new world at once burst open before Theresa! Although she had been a diligent reader of Shakspeare, and knew this particular play almost by heart,—she hung upon the progress of the scenes with a breathless rapture, which made her totally forget the place in which she was, the crowd of which she formed a part. And when the thrilling interest of the story had reached its highest point, and the stern ghastly Queen, (she had assuredly at that moment ceased to be the actress,) walked forth in her sleep, with glazed eye, stealthy step, and hands that would wash themselves clean of “the damning spot,”—Theresa was so violently agitated, that the attention of her companions, entranced as they were by the talent of that magnificent artist, was involuntarily withdrawn from the stage to the spectator. Talbois, in particular, gazed upon her with eager and intent admiration, as he perused the lineaments of her speaking face, the fixed and glistening eyes, the flushed cheek, the parted lips, the small white hands clenched in each other and dropped upon the front of the box. At that moment the fates of the future lives of those two individuals were decided.

It was over—and a heavy flood of tears relieved Theresa of a part of the emotion which had began to grow almost suffocating. Many an eye, inured to the fascination of tragedy, was turned on that box, to examine the features of its beautiful inmate, who remained too closely folded in her dream to be troubled with any retrospections or presentiments. Her companions, however, now began to think of Mr. Lambwood's stern reproofs, and Reuben's interminable rhapsodies, and urged Robert to find their carriage. “For Theresa's sake you know,” said Lucy in an audible whisper; this partially recalled her to herself, and the circumstance of some gentleman mistaking her for an acquaintance and bowing to her, disenchanted her yet more completely.

“To me, Susan? it is impossible! There can be no one here who knows me—and what will they say at home? O why did you bring me here?”

“You appreciate Mrs. Siddons, I see,” observed her neighbour, in the softest tone of his rich voice.

“I have been delighted—O how much delighted!” replied she with a sigh, in which the future mingled with the past. But the fears of anticipation every moment increased as she approached the Worralls! She dreaded the thoughts of meeting

the severe eye of her enthusiastic brother, whose religious feeling was characteristic by a strictness almost ascetic. She repeated again and again to herself: "How can I be blamed? I did not know where I was going: and, after all, what a new and delightful field of enjoyment has been opened to me!" It was in vain:—by the time that she alighted from the coach she would have given anything, *save* the recollection of the last three hours, for an alleviation to her uneasiness. To her unspeakable relief, however, she found that Reuben had never been at Mr. Worrall's to conduct her home: it was long past his usual time, and the wondering what could have prevented him was a new source of disquiet. She took a hurried leave of her friends; resigned the tell-tale garland, the very existence of which she had forgotten, till reminded of it by Lucy, and escorted by Mr. Talbois, set forth homewards.

"I hurry you," said he, slackening his pace after they had walked a few steps together.

"O no, thank you, the faster the better:—I am very impatient to reach home."

Her companion had the delicacy not to inquire the wherefore of this speed. He could hardly suppose it to arise from any objection to his company; for, as they parted on the steps of Mr. Lambwood's front door, it is rumoured that she was artless enough to say: "Good night, Mr. Talbois, and thank you, I hope that we shall soon meet again."

She rang gently once—twice—but no one answered the bell:—a dreadful misgiving crossed her mind. Could they mean to lock her out for the night?—she had heard Mrs. Lambwood mention such things being sometimes done in rigid households; and, almost in a spasm of terror at the bare thought, rung again and louder. This third time, however, she was successful, for Reuben, opening the door softly, beckoned her to come in. Mrs. Lambwood was upon the stairs with a candle in her hand. "My love how could we forget thee?" said she, surprised at Theresa's face of concern; "but this awful judgment of Providence has overtaken us so suddenly. Thou didst not hear it?—thy father,—my husband"—and tears streamed down her cheeks as she spoke—"was stricken by the palsy scarcely two hours ago—and Dr. Magrath, who is above stairs, declares it to be almost the severest case he has ever seen;—the Lord's will be done!"

What a revulsion of feeling did these few words cause in Theresa's mind!—what a sudden change from readiness to abide and answer reproof, to that natural, yet most unreasonable self-reproach which says: "Why was I away when this hap-

pened?" She followed her mother into the sick chamber, and was much shocked by the terrible appearance of the invalid. His face, always livid, and now peculiarly colourless, was drawn on the left side as though it had followed the attraction of a magnet. One hand, totally useless, lay upon the quilt: and the only sign of life which he gave, was that inarticulate moaning so characteristic of pain and feebleness. In answer to her eager inquiries, Dr. Magrath told Theresa that the turn which his disorder took would entirely depend upon the effect of the blisters and other violent remedies applied: and that it was imperatively necessary that he should be carefully watched all night, as the case was one in which a neglected symptom might prove fatal. Mrs. Lambwood chose to sit up, and Theresa, in spite of her remonstrances, insisted upon sharing her vigil.

Reuben retired to rest, and the two addressed themselves to their melancholy task. The night wore slowly on, and the invalid lay in a state of half stupour. Mrs. Lambwood and Theresa sat crouching over the feeble night-lamp, the former reading to herself in a low voice, comforting passages from her pocket-bible:—the latter, in spite of herself, forgetting the gloom and stillness of the sick chamber, with the long dark watery shadows cast upon the roof by the weak light, and the tick of the time-piece—in the thoughts of the brilliancy and animation of the scene which she had so recently left. Every moment she expected her companion to question her: but Mrs. Lambwood made no inquiry—she was too much absorbed in her own anxieties to remember so much as that Theresa had been abroad on that evening.

It was between one and two o'clock in the morning that the sound of a footstep close behind them, made both of the watchers start and look up. The intruder was Reuben,—robed in a long dressing-gown and carrying in his hand a bible. His wild and thoughtful features, now shaded by his long hair, which, in the day, he wore combed back from his forehead, wore now an appearance almost supernatural when beheld by that dim light: animated as they were by an expression of amazement mingled with awe. "What is this, Reuben," whispered Mrs. Lambwood, "that thou art up again so soon?"

"I have dreamed a dream," replied he, in a low solemn voice. "My father will never recover: I have seen him in his shroud, standing by my bed-side."

"O hush!" cried Theresa, "do not tell us now!"

"Be silent daughter," said Mrs. Lambwood composedly, "if it have been given to Reuben to tell me anything, it is

also my duty to hear it. I trust that I shall be enabled to submit myself to any burden which the Lord may be pleased to lay upon me. Go on, Reuben."

"At the other side of my bed stood another figure, also wrapt in a shroud; the very image of my own mother's picture; the two looked quietly upon me, and spoke together."

"And what did they say?" inquired Mrs. Lambwood eagerly, and with the most perfect faith in the authority of Reuben's tale.

"Mother! dear mother!" interrupted Theresa, "remember that this is but an idle dream."

At this instant a moaning sound was heard from the bed; as if the patient wished to turn himself. The two females hastened to his assistance. He was now evidently in very great pain, and as the doctor had desired to be summoned, in case of any change, Reuben was despatched to bring him. He remained with them until morning, and, by that time, the remembrance of the vision of the night had passed away.

A week went slowly over, and still Mr. Lambwood hovered between life and death;—of the two, nearer to the latter. His reason was grievously affected, his speech utterly taken away, and every measure resorted to attended with only a transient success. At length Dr. Magrath pronounced it as his opinion that the sufferer's life might be protracted for many months, perhaps even a year;—but that anything like restoration to his former state of health was a thing not to be hoped for. Every succeeding day confirmed the correctness of his opinion, and the steady-hearted wife prepared her mind for a long attendance on the invalid, and its termination by his being released from his pains by death. It therefore happened that much of the former order of John Lambwood's household was broken up. Reuben was diligently pursuing his devotional studies, with a view to the ministry. His character was a most singular one, and its singularities began, at this period, to be exaggerated by the most extreme variableness of health, and the constant recurrence of acute head-aches, which were succeeded by fits of the deepest mental depression. He possessed a morbidly tender conscience, which magnified the most unimportant trifles into matters of grave self-reproach; and had far outran his instructor's requisitions in denouncing everything which bordered upon relaxation, or would induce cheerfulness of spirit. His mind was almost always in a state of unnatural excitement,—diving restlessly into the abstruse and mysterious parts of the scriptures, and drawing thence wild and new conclusions which often displeased as much as astonished his foster-father. The



only link which seemed to bind him to this earth was his sister, and their mutual affection was beautiful, from the total dissimilarity of their characters: his was full of scruple and self-condemnation for loving any perishing thing of earth so well;—hers, tempered by a fear, such as makes the people of the East follow softly the steps of those whom they believe to be inspired. They spent little time together,—they conversed little with each other;—but, as Mrs. Lambwood had said to her husband, they loved each other, and it was enough.

The household derangement caused by John Lambwood's long illness was anything but favourable to Theresa's solidity of mind. Her character had reached that point when a few influences decide its future cast. She was now to be found at the Worralls' more frequently than ever,—not that she neglected her home duties; on the contrary, the management of the house devolved upon her, and, besides this, she managed to pass a large portion of every day in the sick chamber,—cheering the anxiety of her foster-mother with every imaginable device suggested by a hopeful temperament and a lively fancy. All this time, however, her mind was, with rapid strides, separating itself farther and farther from the creeds and habits of thought in which she had been educated. One cause of this sudden change might be the frequent society of Mr. Talbois, who chose to remain in ——— all that summer, and seemed to take particular pleasure in developing her powers, and watching the eager delight with which she possessed herself of any new discovery. They walked together,—they read together, but not always with agreement. She was in love with romance; nothing was too stirring for her taste, made all the keener by its not having been fed in childhood with fairy legends, and goblin tales; nothing was too improbable for her belief. He, whose enthusiasm to begin was far less in measure than hers, had been long ago sneered into a certain smoothness and moderation by the world in which he had passed his life, would have pruned this exuberance, and regulated these high flights if he could;—but he tried in vain;—those who cut the cord cannot always call back the bird. She devoured the "Arabian Nights;" she revelled in the chambers of Spenser's mellow and antique imagery; but, above all, worshipped with a blind idolatry those rare and tremendous writers, the old dramatists;—and as she walked to and fro in the noiseless house, her mind was busily brooding over the magnificent, but somewhat over-wrought scenes of Massinger and Webster, and Beaumont and Fletcher and Marlow; and she began to long, and to fancy, and project, —and was only drawn down again to common life by the re-

membrance of something which Mr. Talbois had said. All this time the Worralls looked on in silence,—at first the silence of curiosity and amusement, but ere long the quiet observation of sarcasm.

Another passion was gradually awakened by this sedulous nourishing of a too vehement imagination,—the passion which, of all others, is the one most fatal to a woman's happiness,—a longing after fame. What had been in her mother high-toned enthusiasm, was inherited by Theresa under the form of a yearning after distinction, an impatience of a common-place lot; a love of power, veiled by a delusive idea of the good and great things she would achieve were it once in her possession. In those days female authorship was not as common as it is now; and the bright few who had undertaken its labours, were almost as much admired for their singularity as for their talents. The cry of "Blue-stocking" had been raised, and men looked upon a woman's work with that lordly superiority which could afford to bestow a *little* praise. And this was not the species of fame which Theresa felt would satisfy the cravings of her mind. A desire to appear upon the stage, to embody some of the characters which she loved so enthusiastically, was a castle which there was no harm, and great amusement in building; but like the fox into the churn, this intruding fancy presently made good its entrance, and established its residence. It soon became natural to Theresa to fancy herself the Lady Macbeth,—the Virgin Martyr,—the Duchess of Amalfi;—she became familiar with their words, and, from those, with their thoughts; she felt how they must have looked, how acted; and it was her favourite pleasure to pace to and fro in her chamber, working herself up into a fever by reciting the most passionate of their declamations, till the indulgence of her ill-regulated fancy became mistaken for the promptings of destiny.

It was towards the end of June, when tree and meadow are clothed with that deep and profuse green, which becomes monotonous to the eye, and gives the evening walk a sombreness, almost a melancholy, equally remote from the hopeful freshness of spring, or the gorgeous variety of autumn,—that Theresa was prevailed upon by Mr. Talbois to accompany him in an evening drive, in spite of the teazings of the Worralls, "who were beginning," as she said to herself, "to take a very unpleasant and familiar notice of her concerns." The fresh air was delightful to one who had all that day been inhaling the loaded atmosphere of the sick room;—and she rode on, by the side of her courtly companion, undisturbed by any wonder as to what he could mean by earnestly pressing her to allow

him the pleasure of her company. He, for his part, was in a reserved, if not a moody humour,—said much less than usual, and that little was of the gravest,—and seemed purposely to select those close and shady lanes which, towards sunset, might suit the contemplative and the serious. The hay-harvest was in its prime, filling the air with balmy sweetness; the wild roses had climbed to the tops of the hedges; the lime trees hung heavy with bloom. There could not be a more delicious evening;—and yet Mr. Talbois was infinitely more silent than usual. What could it mean? Theresa almost thought she should venture to rally him on this unusual taciturnity, if he drove on, saying a word at every milestone, and no more, and scarcely answering what she said.

But, just as the words were on her lips, a little incident diverted the current of her thoughts. There is, about four miles from our town, a place, where four grassy lanes, gently sloping down amongst plantations, meet; and their intersection is marked by two or three of those curious old stones, commonly referred to in the days of the Druids, upon which antiquarian eyes have seen rings, and serpents, and other symbolical figures. As they approached these, Theresa perceived that a small group of persons was gathered round them,—one standing a little higher than the rest,—and, immediately after, the loud tones of a man's voice reached them.

“What is this?” said Mr. Talbois, driving more slowly, so as to take a deliberate view of the little company. As they drew nearer, Theresa perceived that the speaker was her brother.

The young man was standing upon a fragment of stone which had fallen from one of the larger masses. He had tied a coloured handkerchief round his forehead, otherwise his head was bare; and his face, turned towards the west, was just touched by one of the last sunbeams that streamed in through an opening in the boughs. This partial light, falling upon his features, suited well their elevated expression, and gave almost a beauty to sallow cheek and sunken eye. Round him were gathered a few hay-makers, middle-aged men, leaning attentively on their rakes, and brown comely women in their cool summer dress; one with a baby at her breast, another, holding by the hand a little child: and he was addressing them in a strain of plain eloquence fresh from the heart, turning the season and their employment to a religious use, and exhorting them to use the same diligence in the spiritual as well as in the temporal harvest-field. Tears stood in Theresa's eyes while she listened,—for her companion, struck by the pictur-

esque appearance of the group, stopped his horse; and when, after a short pause, they proceeded unnoticed, as it seemed, by the preacher, she turned her head often to look back, until the branches shut out the tall figure with his outstretched arm, from her view.

"That young methodist was very like your brother, was he not?" said Mr. Talbois, breaking a silence of some moments' duration.

"That young man *was* my brother!" replied Theresa, thinking aloud; "poor Reuben! I wish I were as good as he is!"

There was another pause, even longer than before.

"Really," at last said Mr. Talbois, attempting a gayer tone, "this is too dismal, and might be the prelude of a leave-taking for ever, instead of only for a few weeks, or, at the utmost, a month or two."

"Leave-taking!—a month or two!" cried Theresa, surprised out of herself; "are you going away, Mr. Talbois?—And when—when must it be? but I have no right to inquire."

"I leave for Dorsetshire at six o'clock to-morrow morning. You have *every* right to inquire." He again paused abruptly.

Theresa blushed deeply; though she would have given a king's ransom for the command of her colour;—his last words were so strange, and then this sudden checking of himself, as though he felt that he had said too much.

"May I ask," resumed her companion, in a more constrained voice, "whether you are likely to remain here,—I mean as a resident?"

"I think so," replied Theresa, and then, struggling to resume her old frank manner, added:—"But we shall meet again, shall we not?" I am indebted to you for entrance into a new world,—and it will amuse you to see how many steps farther I have advanced, by the time that you come again. You *will* come again to see the Worralls!"—concluding her sentence hastily lest the tone of her voice should betray the more than concern which she felt.

"I *shall* come again," replied Talbois with an effort; "but not to see the Worralls. If I ask to see another friend whom I have learned to know, and to admire, in —, shall I be denied admittance?"

Theresa could only muster sufficient composure to falter out:—"Surely, no."

"Well then, I will try to live on that promise.—Here we are at home already! Confound Bayard! he is slow enough usually. Farewell then, dear Miss Grafton!—dear Theresa!—farewell—but to return!"

Theresa shook hands with him in silence. One of her gloves was half off;—he withdrew it entirely, and, as he drove away, she derived some melancholy consolation from remembering the reverence with which she had seen him consign it to his pocket-book.

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## PART II.

### THE EXPERIENCE OF A DEBUTANTE.

“There are the players.”

*Hamlet.*

MR. CLACKWORTH, at that time the popular manager of a theatre in a large and gay town in the west of England, was breakfasting at his ease in a chamber, the littered state whereof would have made tidy housewives ready to faint, while the objects it contained were sufficient to have amused the most insatiable of Fatimas during the week of her husband's absence, so that she should have forgotten to put her hand in her pocket only to *feel* for the key of the blue chamber. It was a small room, sixteen feet square, and its walls were crowded to overflowing with curiosities and ornaments, choice cabinet pictures and curious costumes, mirrors, girandoles;—here, a row of black and gold shelves, creaking under the weight of *princeps* editions of rare old plays—there, some Turkish scimitar, or murderous looking brace of pistols, which had done their duty in Bajazet or Bobadil—here, a bust of Mrs. Cibber—there, a French doll, dressed in the newest mode, to resemble Madame Rombot, the celebrated *dansuse*. The carpet was a genuine Turkey rug—the table, with its equipage of exquisite Sevres china, had been purchased at some sale of the cast-off goods of a Mancini, or a Pompadour; and before the fire slept a Persian greyhound of remarkable beauty, which had been presented to the eccentric manager by a physician, who had received it, in part of a fee for attending six sick ladies belonging to the establishment of Elfi Bey.

The owner of these treasures was, after all, the greatest curiosity in the chamber. A good liver—you might see by his face; a man of breeding, you might guess from the splendid volume of Brantome which lay open upon the table, just beyond

the neighbourhood of his buttered muffin ; a gentleman, in right of that indescribable air not to be misunderstood, which even a somewhat theatrical parade of jewellery on his fingers, and that peculiar style of hair, as completely and characteristically Thespian as the venerable green curtain itself could not destroy ; a kind man, as might be divined from the attention paid to him by a quaint, tidy-looking old lady, who came in and out with great zeal ; his appearance was so singular (though not unpleasing) that any one, who possessed a taste for the extraordinary, would have turned from all the inanimate wonders of the place, to study the strange figure of the humourist, its owner. He was short in stature, and as perfectly round and guiltless of a waist, as if he had been pressed through a cylinder too small for his bulk ; his eyes were small, keen, and set so far apart, that his mouth, by observing the painter's rule, which regulates its length by their distance from corner to corner, was unaccountably long, and so pinched in towards the middle, that its under lip was almost entirely invisible. His linen was of the finest texture, and scrupulously white ; his slippers of the costliest morocco, and his damask dressing-gown brocaded with a perfect pantomime of dragons and rose-bushes.

"A young lady in the anti-room, Martha?—can't see her,—can't possibly see her ;—never will see people at meal times ;—tell her to call again, and—stay a moment, Martha—what is she like?"

"I can't positively say, Sir, except that she is in deep mourning."

"O, Mrs. Meriden, the widow, I suppose,—tired of her weeds, and wishing to be re-engaged."

"No, Sir ; it is a much younger lady than Mrs. Meriden ; when would you wish her to call again?—This is quite a stranger."

"Stay a moment, Martha ;—did she say what she wanted ?—Perhaps it is that jade Mademoiselle Chèvre's maid come, with a long face, to tell me that her mistress has a nervous fever, and can't dance to-night,—and this her last night, too, before she goes to Plymouth ! Plague take these Frenchwomen ! why can't English people be content without them ?"

"No, sir,—Mademoiselle Chèvre's maid speaks no English ; and, besides, I should know that outlandish head of hair of her's under any bonnet."

"Show her in, then, Martha ;—I can't think—alas ! for the days that are gone ! I once could eat my breakfast in peace ! You are *sure* she is young, Martha ? Show her in ; and, if I

ring again, bring up some fresh chocolate," and the gentleman turned down the cuffs of his dressing-gown, settled his wig, and prepared to look gay and gallant.

"What name shall I say, Ma'am?" said Martha, sending her voice before her, after the fashion of Homer's heroes.

"It does not matter," replied the most musical voice which Mr. Clackworth had ever heard; he again arranged the ends of his cravat, so to do full justice to its frills of real Valenciennes.

"Well, Ma'am, it is very strange. The lady, Sir," cried Martha, displeased at the visitor's reserve.

"Very well, you may go, Martha. Pray, Madam, take a chair;—that will do, Martha, you need not wait."

"Well, to be sure," muttered the discomfited housekeeper, leaving the room as slowly as she dared, "to think of any one's coming at this time in the morning!"

"And now, Madam, that we are alone," said Mr. Clackworth, edging his chair near to the one occupied by his visitor, "may I beg to know the name of my guest, and what has procured me so early an honour?"

The veiled lady seemed to find some difficulty in speaking.

"Very diffident indeed," observed Mr. Clackworth, *aside*; "pray, Madam, do me the favour, if you have not breakfasted, to allow me to ring for some fresh chocolate."

"Thank you, Sir, replied the incognita, "I have breakfasted."

"I am truly sorry to hear it; it will condemn me to the dullness of finishing my repast alone;—you will excuse my proceeding. Here Romeo! Romeo!—here, poor fellow! I had almost forgotten you," and he stopped and fed his greyhound with the remains of the beefsteak.

"I ought to beg your pardon," said the lady, breaking, at least, the somewhat awkward pause which ensued, "for thus intruding upon you at such an early hour."

"Never too early to allow me the happiness of making your acquaintance," replied the courtly manager, whose politeness had not received a check by the result of a stealthy examination of the features which lurked under the poke of the large crape bonnet.

"But I was told," continued his guest, "that I should at this time be almost sure of finding you disengaged, and was anxious to wait upon you to know—if—in short, you would allow me to—having long had a decided inclination—"

"My dear young lady," replied my Clackworth, in his most encouraging tone, "I hope you are not afraid of me; but you are nearly as mysterious as the Sphinx herself. To the point,

however, let us waste no time in useless delicacies. Am I correct in guessing that the purport of your visit refers to a first appearance, which you wish to make upon the stage, under my direction?"—another motion of the chair brought him close to her elbow.

"You are, Sir:—family difficulties—"

"Well, my dear young lady, there is no occasion to enter upon the chapter of reasons; we ought rather to speak of qualifications;—nay, really, you should taste my chocolate if only to give you courage. Miss Farren made it immortal, when she did me the honour to breakfast with me, by calling it the *elixir vite*. What have been your studies?—but, pray understand me, I am by no means sure that I am in circumstances to offer you an engagement except in case of the most decided success."

The lady hastened to assure him that such was by no means her expectation. She was, indeed, anxious to be permitted to appear under his auspices, from the high character which his management bore; as to any engagement, that was, of course, a thing for future consideration,

"Very reasonably said, my dear young lady, I must confess. —Down, Romeo, down sir! you are *too* greedy!—Yes, Madam, I am aware the name of my theatre does stand high; and your wish is a very natural one. I could mention a score of distinguished names, at least, of those who could date their celebrity from the time when they first trod my boards. But then I have so much upon my hands just now. I have engaged Mademoiselle Chèvre, the famous dancer, for three months, in conjunction with the Plymouth and Exeter people; and, while she is here, no one will listen to, or look at anything else; and besides,—but, however, Madam, will you do me the favour to read a passage or two;—you have *never* appeared before, you say,—not even in private?"

"Never."

"Well, then, supposing we say some of the speeches in Portia's part, or Juliet's—whichever you like. Here, Madam, is my pocket Shakspeare, my breviary, as I call it; will you do me the favour?"

"Thank you, Sir," replied the novice, trembling as she declined the book, "I think I know them all by heart."

"Good! good! a well-stored memory is not a bad foundation for Thespian honours. May I beg of you to remove your bonnet,—you must excuse me, but I must be permitted to form some idea;—allow me; though I fear I shall prove but a poor lady's maid."

Theresa gave back as he arose; and, untying the strings,



divested herself of her bonnet with such an unsteady hand, that her comb too was loosened in the operation, and a flood of long silken tresses fell upon her shoulders, and mantled her brow, which was now covered with the deepest crimson.

"Ahem! ahem! very satisfactory," said the old gentleman, apparently not discontented with the revelation; "and now may I ask your name."

"Aubrey, Sir," replied our old friend in a faltering voice. Alas for truth! "Aubrey! a very euphonious name indeed! I will not inquire whether it is genuine. Nay, don't let me distress you; it is so very common a step on the part of the timid and inexperienced. I remember hearing Mrs. Abington say, but that's no matter;—now, my dear Miss Aubrey, something of Juliet,—suppose me to be your Romeo, or, (*do* let me persuade you out of this extreme sensitiveness) talk to my dog and forget that I am by:—the balcony scene, for instance."

Poor Theresa, who had long ago, imagined that she had screwed all her courage up to the sticking place, felt now that it was called upon, how wofully deficient she was in nerve; and her voice faltered so much, that she was unable to do justice to her own very good and original conception of the character of the love-sick Italian girl: nevertheless, this very tremour imparted a tenderness to her manner, which, to use the professional phrase, seemed to *take* mightily. Mr. Clackworth sat leaning back in his easy chair, with the points of his thumbs joined, occasionally putting in so much of the dialogue as was necessary to the connexion of the scene, and murmuring to himself, such morsels of encouragement as, "Pretty!—ah! very pretty!—ah! good! don't be afraid of giving way to your feelings:—a very sweetly toned voice, upon my word! we shall easily, add a little more power. Thank you, madam, I will tax your excellent memory no further."

"I should feel more at home in Constance or Lady Macbeth," ventured his visitor.

"Pooh, pooh! my dear,—excuse me, but I am an old man: never dream of Constance or Lady Macbeth for these fifteen years to come or, at all events, till you can write *Mrs.* before your name. And now I really hardly can tell what to say to you. I am pleased with you there is no denying it; and nature has been very bountiful to you: don't blush we take all these things into consideration—but . . ."

He was interrupted by the entrance of Martha—Miss Randal's, Sir, wishes to see you immediately, Sir."

"Bless me! what can have brought her here so early? *she*

always makes every one wait half an hour at least at rehearsal."

"I hear him. He is in," said a sonorous voice in the ante-chamber—"I will enter. Speak, Sir, is this true?"

"Good morning, Miss Randalls," said Clackworth rather distantly.

The lady was a full-blown woman of thirty-five, upon whom the wear and tear of stage life, and some whispered, of self-indulgence, had told their tale. She was dressed in the extravagance of fashion, and advanced with a proud and somewhat resentful air.

"I will not accept of your greeting," replied she in the same heroic tone, "until I know whether it is to be peace or war, whether we are friends or foes."

"Pray explain yourself, Miss Randalls."

"In a word then, who is this young person?" and as she spoke she extended her arm in the most imposing attitude towards Theresa, who felt a little disposed to smile, a very little to cry.

"This young lady, Miss Aubrey,—upon my word, Miss Randalls, your inquiry is very extraordinary."

"Am I to interpret this hesitation as confirmation strong?" replied the tragedian queen. "Am I to conclude that, at last, you are turning traitor to my cause, and with my cause, to your own best interests?—am I, in short, to be supplanted by this raw girl? look to it, Mr. Clackworth, and answer me faithfully."

"Now, pray, what is the meaning of all this intemperance?"

"Intemperance, sir! will you dare to echo *that* calumny? Clackworth, I will neither be insulted nor trifled with:—you best know for how many years I have been a faithful and zealous coadjutor of your establishment. If this young person is to be introduced to my detriment;—be sincere, be honest in your villany,—if, I say, this Miss Aubrey is to be engaged, we are two people henceforward and for ever!"

"Upon my word, this flight is rather too high," replied the manager, his civility waxing smaller at every word he spoke: "I cannot for an instant, allow your right to make this inquiry; and must beg, that if you will visit me at such untimely hours, you will do me the favour of coming with the intention of being a little more agreeable."

"Is it so?" replied the Randalls, her eyes flashing a fire which she had never been able to kindle for a Roxalana or Statira:—"Is it so?—am I to be despised,—laid upon the shelf, and, gracious Heavens! for this girl?—Clackworth, you shall repent this!—and for *you*, madam,"—she swept across the

room towards the place where Theresa sat, absolutely trembling at the sight and sound of so much violence.

"And for *you*, madam," interrupted Mr. Clackworth in his most decided tone, "I must beg your attention for one moment, Miss Randalls. Be pleased to consider our engagement together as at an end—now and for ever. You remember that on my part, it is entirely optional how long I retain you, and that you have annoyed me rather too often by these scenes in private; which allow me to observe, Miss Aubrey, are in terrible bad taste. It is your own doing, madam, that we are separated. Good morning—and before you enter into treaty with another manager, permit me to recommend to you the study of keeping your temper; particularly when you go out to pay morning visits."

The rage which was provoked by this cool reproof passes description. Mr. Clackworth was known to be immovable in his decisions, and by this steadiness he had been enabled to maintain a long and successful reign over his motley subjects; and Miss Randalls was sober enough to remember too well, how often she had sinned and been forgiven, to entertain a thought of making her peace on this occasion. She had, therefore, motive for restraining her spite, and grew so violent, that at last, the manager took her gently by the elbows, and conducting her to the door of the ante-chamber, desired Martha to show her out.

"Show me out, you paltry fellow!" were her last words—"but remember that you have provoked me—and tremble!"

"A very violent person," observed he coolly as he returned to Theresa, wiping his forehead after the exertion which the expulsion of the irate Randalls had required: "A most extremely violent person! but I cannot submit to any dictation, madam. I have done with her; and therefore, my dear young lady, if you can manage your first appearance tolerably soon, and should succeed, I shall be glad to enlist you as her substitute."

Theresa expressed her great satisfaction at this unlooked for good fortune, and they then began to enter into particulars which it would be tedious to record. After a long interview they parted, Mr. Clackworth having first advised Theresa to place herself under respectable protection as soon as possible, and mentioning a respectable family connected with the theatre, whose conduct was unexceptionable, and could be of use to her in her profession, no less as an assistance than as a safeguard. She thanked him for this fatherly care of her, and took her

leave with strangely mingled feelings of exultation and retrospect. We must briefly examine the latter.

Many and various had been the events crowded into the space of the last two years; strangely had the chains of circumstances seemed to fall from around her, and leave her, if not compel her to a freedom of agency, in which it is so difficult for a young and beautiful woman to act with discretion. In the first place, Mr. Lambwood had lived only a few weeks after Theresa had parted from Mr. Talbois on that memorable evening. His affectionate wife, who had, all her life, prayed for nothing so eagerly as that she might not survive her husband, and who was utterly worn out by her anxious attendance upon him, began, within a few weeks of his decease, to show symptoms of a consumptive tendency. So far from being alarmed by their danger, with the natural eagerness of her temperament, she rejoiced in the prospect of so soon rejoining her departed companion. Some might have complained that this extreme anxiety to lay down the burden of earth partook of the nature of selfishness, inasmuch as she rarely seemed to advert to the future lot of the foster-children she was leaving behind her—but it is an ungracious thing to interfere with the workings of sorrow. “When she became assured,” says the eloquent minister, who drew up an account of her last moments for the edification of survivors—“and that she was fast approaching the valley of the shadow of death, an unspeakable delight and thankfulness possessed her spirit, which seemed to await its Maker’s summons with wings already spread—and to trouble itself for nothing save to make haste and possess the fair inheritance provided for it. During the last month of her life, her adopted daughter never quitted her side for an hour, and had, as she thought, kissed her to sleep a few moments before she expired. Never, indeed, was a death-bed less fearful! No sooner had the soul departed, than a smile, radiant beyond all description, clothed her pale but still comely features; a smile, which told that the hope of the deceased was well founded—and that she had entered into the joys of Paradise.”

Upon opening Mr. Lambwood’s will, it had been discovered that he had left all his disposable property to Reuben Grafton. The greater part of her income had arisen from annuities upon his own and his wife’s life; so that the sum bequeathed was by no means a considerable one, and the charge given to the young man to provide for his sister could only be obeyed by his proving economical as well as discreet, and adopting some calling which might increase his income.

Mrs. Lambwood had bequeathed three hundred pounds to the

desolate girl,—desolate, because there was little hope of her finding in her brother either a protector or a counsellor; and her own mind was in that unsettled state when both of the two were urgently needed. Reuben had long since forsaken his first religious friends as lukewarm and too conformable to the world, and joined a sect of more fervent and less educated worshippers, to whom he became an oracle and a minister. It was lamentable to see so fine a mind rapidly approaching utter ruin, if not partial insanity; but the evil was past remedy. His old friends, in the strict quiet congregation which he had quitted, remonstrated with him, but in vain;—he was always surrounded by his new associates, for whom no doctrine was too wild, or no zeal too excessive, and whose labours were most chiefly exercised upon those of the most illiterate and degraded class, and with the most profit; from the same reason which renders the bodily constitutions of such accessible to remedies which would hurry those of more moderate habits to the grave.

All this Theresa saw with dismay,—she groaned under the infliction of the coarse society of Reuben's new connexions;—she doubted and disbelieved his counsels, and presently became obliged, in self-defence, to resist his requests, which were peremptorily urged without patience or discretion. The effect of the few months which she passed thus miserably under her brother's guardianship, was to alienate her in spirit more than ever from her old habits, and to give her floating fancies form and substance. As for her parents, no one could give her tidings of their life or death; and the only other friends from whom she had a right to expect help or countenance, proved themselves, as worldly people will always do on such occasions, selfishly unwilling to do their duty by one who had some claims on their sympathy.

Yes, it may be calculated upon as a certainty that those, who, from idleness or vanity, are the first to persuade another to change his opinions or habits, are also the first to denounce such a change, should it extend a hand's breadth beyond the liberty permitted by their own code. They will move the stone, and then wonder that it rolls; they will tear away the cobwebs of old prejudices to let in the light, and then complain that their pupil sees too much. Thus it was between the Worralls and Theresa. They had opened her eyes to the fascinations of the world; they had encouraged her in cultivating her intellect, and now they began to blame her as frivolous, because, though her heart was aching with anxiety, she had not lost all power of taking pleasure in the very things which they had taught her to love; and as free-thinking, because her mind

had taken to itself the license of passing the bounds of the circle, wherein theirs were trammelled, as strictly as the Lambwoods had been within their narrow ring of sectarianism. There were other causes, too, for this heartless uncharitableness. Theresa was a beauty, and admired; and they, who had brought that beauty into notice, were jealous of the admiration which it excited. In short, their friendship had visibly cooled ever since the time of Mr. Talbois' visit, and even before Mr. Lambwood's death, the girls had reached the point of talking *at* Theresa, by spreading all manner of reports, and dropping such hints as,—“Mr. Talbois was so gay at Weymouth,—they had letters,—and it was said that he was going to be married to an Earl's ward;—but they did not believe it; he was *such* a flirt—not in the least likely to marry,—they had known it when he first came to them, and therefore kept on their guard.” Alas for truth again; for the three first nights of his visit, Lucy and Susan had lain awake trying to find out which of the two he liked the best! The intercourse between the Worralls and Theresa became more and more constrained week by week. The young ladies about this time formed *attachments*, and their prudent parents began to think that their intimacy with such a “strange young person” as Theresa, was likely to do them much injury in the sight of their beloveds, who were steady substantial men of business, and had no notion of poetry or any such silly doings; and though they would go to the theatre occasionally to see a play, regarded the authors and actors by whom they condescended to be entertained, much with the same contempt as the Brahmin regards the Pariah withal.

It was long ere Theresa became fully alive to the unkindness of her companions, of late so zealous to enlarge the sphere of her pleasures; it was long before she could believe, that it would be a relief to them to let the acquaintance drop decently. Some who read this, may possibly, at some period or other of their lives, have made similar discoveries,—and such only can understand the poignancy of her feelings, which the buoyancy of youthful spirits, and the hopefulness of her temperament could hardly overcome or soften. She was, however, diverted from dwelling on their falseness by new trials. At this juncture, Thomas Proudfoot renewed his addresses with a dogged perseverance, which assailed her in the morning with the same solicitations as she had refused to listen to on the previous evening. Reuben, too, would fain have introduced to her notice as lovers, some as enthusiastic, and more coarse than himself; and even began to threaten her with coercion should she refuse to entertain their odious proposals. He regarded her as

one possessed with an evil spirit, which was only to be expelled by force, and would pray over her, and apply denunciatory texts of scripture to her case, with a freedom which totally destroyed her reverence for truths in such a perverted state. At last, she could endure no more, and resolved to take flight from so comfortless and disturbed a home. Then came the questions, whither was she to go? what plans must she adopt? The answer was always the same,—*the stage*,—and so strongly did circumstances second her natural inclination, that she thought herself only yielding to necessity in adopting a theatrical life as her profession. Her plans were promptly taken;—she gathered together her few possessions and as much of Mrs. Lambswood's legacy as yet remained to her, and, availing herself of her brother's absence from home on a tent-preaching excursion, took leave of her native town; and, braving the difficulties of a lone woman's journey, arrived at ———, as we have seen, sought out Mr. Clackworth, and thanks to the jealousy of Miss Randalls, was conditionally enlisted as one of his corps.

The family in which Theresa, at Mr. Clackworth's instance, took up her abode, consisted of a couple who had been attached to theatres ever since their infancy, and had been introduced to the notice of the public as soon as they were old enough to cry the parts of the Babes in the Wood, and small enough to be covered by the substantial leaves dropped upon them by the stage robin. They had, therefore, grown up without any other ideas or habits than those of the green-room; and, happening to be thrown much together, had married, as much for their mutual profit as for mutual love; and, with constitutional carelessness, had laughed and bustled their way through the rough and smooth of life, without encountering any very serious trials. Both of the pair had preserved their good name unspotted:—it is strange to see what fair flowers, neglected plants, growing in rugged places, will bear,—and, as strange, what sound principles and right thoughts sometimes meant in persons, whose lot Nature seems to have cast in crooked paths. 'The little couple,' as they were constantly called behind the scenes, were as truthful as they were merry-hearted, as honest as they were industrious, and continued favourites with the public, and friends with each other. She was the *soubrette* of the company—brown, nimble, and familiar;—he, in virtue of an expressive face, smooth voice, and a careful pronunciation, was trusted with the parts of lovers and heroes when no star chanced to be shining in the provinces. Such were Mr. and Mrs. Tyrell; and Th

resa soon learned to esteem herself happy in having found such a cheerful and respectable shelter as their house afforded.

She was not allowed much time for introduction to the world behind the scenes,—that woful region of disenchantment to those who fancy the stage a fairy land full of courtesy and happiness,—or she was desired to rehearse the part of Juliet, to prepare for an early appearance. In the meantime, however, she saw enough to terrify one who had been educated in the strictest of strict households,—enough to make her thankful to creep to Mrs. Tyrell's side when the business of her own part was over, and tremble whenever she was addressed by a strange voice. And oh! the numerous disgusts which she was compelled to endure, upon hearing the most splendid passages of her favourite authors, mutilated or debased by the incompetent or vulgar! Then she was perplexed beyond description by the numerous stage practices and etiquettes with which it was necessary for her to become familiar,—entrances, embraces, and innumerable other small matters of which she had never dreamed before. It was well for her that Mrs. Tyrell liked her, and, with her ready wit and cheerful spirit, helped her through all her troubles; enough, however remained to make her anticipate her *debut* with increasing anxiety. She began to wonder whether to be admired or hated was the greatest trial; to have to endure Mr. Clackworth's old world courtesies, which in the opinion of by-standers, tended to nothing short of a renunciation of the dear delights of bachelor-hood, at her feet,—and the insolent compliments of those patrons of the drama who were admitted behind the scenes; or to be mortified by the undisguised contempt of Mademoiselle Chèvre, who was provoked by the succession of one dangler from her train after another,—and to discover that the Randalls had left her sting behind her, and prepared not a few of her new companions to regard her with suspicion. Her beauty was a cause of envy;—her accent an object of remark; and then the daily cabals and manœuvrings which she witnessed!—But to be brief, she received one morning a visit from Mr. Clackworth, who requested her to prepare for her *debut* on the following Tuesday, (the present day was Saturday;) Mademoiselle Chèvre being about to take her farewell benefit, and “anxious,” as the bills set forth, “to present the public with as much attraction as possible.” This arrangement was the result of an intrigue; but Theresa, herself as guiltless as a child, thought of nothing but the terrors of her impending *debut*, and turned, as Mrs. Tyrell said, “paler than white,” when that vivacious little woman bustled into her room, bearing a bill nearly as long as herself, printed in gigantic type.



AMAZING NOVELTY FOR TUESDAY EVENING!!!

## MADEMOISELLE CHEVRE

IN THREE NEW DANCES,

BEING POSITIVELY HER LAST APPEARANCE,

AND

THE TRAGEDY OF ROMEO AND JULIET,

THE PART OF JULIET BY

MISS AUBREY,

BEING HER FIRST APPEARANCE UPON ANY STAGE.

"Give you joy, Miss Aubrey?" said Tyrell, gaily, when he came home from rehearsal, "there is not a place to be had in the boxes on Tuesday for love or money!"

"Mademoiselle Chèvre is very popular," was Theresa's answer.

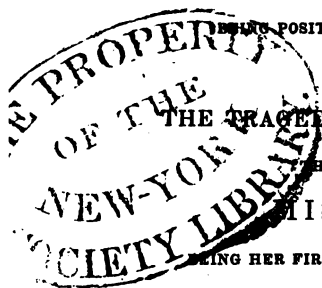
"Mademoiselle Fiddlestick!" replied he; "she knew well enough what she was about when she prevailed upon Clackworth to fix your first appearance on her benefit night. Had it not been for that she might have danced to empty benches, you may depend upon it. Mademoiselle Chèvre has been too insolent here to have any right to expect much countenance; and, as she is to start for Exeter on Wednesday morning, I have no doubt she would rather witness your triumph, than look at an empty box-sheet. These foreigners are all alike—perfect Jews."

"She is insufferably rapacious," replied his helpmate; "Sir Harry Maristow sent her a most splendid ruby ring the other morning, in token of his admiration; and what do you think?—she sent it back to him to have the ruby engraved!"

"Nay, Nancy—"

"And Sir Maristow, as she calls him in her broken English, replied that he could not think of parting with the merest trifle she could do him the honour to give him, that he would certainly attend to her taste in the choice of a motto, and wear the ring for her sake."

"Excellent! most excellent! Nancy;—but dinner is growing



cold while we are abusing Mademoiselle Chèvre. Come, Miss Aubrey, sit down—this pigeon is *for your benefit!* ha! ha! ha!" and the three sat merrily down to their dinner.

The next day was Sunday;—Mr. and Mrs. Tyrell set off to the catholic chapel, leaving Theresa alone, who was suffering from a severe head-ache, and was resolved to indulge herself with the dangerous luxury of a few hours of perfect quietness. The Fates, however, decreed that her reverie should be interrupted; for scarcely had she enjoyed the contemplation of her sweet and bitter thoughts, for one poor half-hour, when a knock at the door startled her;—a well-known voice, "Is Miss Aubrey at home, alone?" increased her perturbation, and the entrance of Mr. Clackworth, dressed in his sprucest suit, completed the measure of her annoyance. He advanced towards her, bowing and smiling very sweetly.

"I cannot regret the malady which keeps you a prisoner," said he seating himself, "as it has also procured me the pleasure of this undisturbed interview. I hope that you are not very unwell, though Mrs. Tyrell, whom I met in Albany Street told me she thought you were feverish. Permit me to feel your pulse; I am something of a physician."

"O thank you, Sir," replied Theresa lightly, "it is only a head-ache; a good night's rest will be sure to put it to flight."

"Only a head-ache!—surely that is enough, my dear young lady, caused, I have no doubt by a natural anxiety with respect to 'the great, the important day!'"—Confess to me, are you not a little afraid? It was of this particular thing that I came to speak."

Theresa owned to a little fear.

"My dear and excellent young lady," continued the manager, "it was about this very little fear that I wished to converse with you, to consult with you what is best for our mutual happiness."

"Our mutual happiness!" repeated Theresa to herself,— "whatever can be coming?—if my first appearance could be deferred, Sir"—

"Out of the question, my dear Miss Aubrey—out of the question!—couldn't be, 'if Heaven would make me such another world, of one entire and perfect chrysolite!'" I should have a riot to a certainty, so much has been said about it. And besides, it would be a serious loss to me. I have been obliged to pay Mrs. Harrington of the Queen's three guineas a night for the last fortnight: and that virago Miss Randalls, goes trumpeting over all the town, that I have engaged an actress whom I dare not bring forward—but I did well to get rid of

her, the vixen!—No, my dear young lady, such a thing is not to be thought of."

"What is it then you wish me to do?"

"Why, my dear young lady," replied the manager, with the most alarming tenderness of manner, "I have come hither on purpose to consult with you. I should be loth, I am sure, to throw any difficulties in the way, when there are none; most especially in your case: but this excess of your amiable sensitiveness makes me a *little* nervous about your success upon the stage,—you must excuse my frankness on the score of my very sincere regard—so that, in short, madam, for I am not a man of many words, if you should be exposed to exchange the triumphs of the theatre, for the solid comforts of domestic life, I can offer you"—

"O Mr. Clackworth!" cried Theresa, rising very suddenly.

"Nay, my dear young lady, to tell you that you are admired, cannot, *ought* not to surprise you. I have seen *many* ladies, in the course of my tolerably extended experience, but none who combine so many—I am serious, my dear Miss Aubrey, and only tender my services to you, as a faithful and devoted partner for life, at this juncture, to convince you of my disinterestedness. I entreat you to give me a favourable hearing!" and he fairly sunk down upon his knees before her, and took one of her hands between his own with a gentle violence.

Theresa, in spite of her amazement and vexation at her suitor's perseverance, could not but feel a little diverted at the sight of the prostrate beau. Had she known the vigorous siege which had been laid to the manager's heart, she might, perhaps, have set a higher value on the conquest she had made. However, her momentary desire to smile passed away, and she began, as connectedly as she could, to apologize and to deny—Mr. Clackworth's earnestness totally precluding the possibility of her imagining, for an instant, that he could be in joke. It was a difficult matter to make him comprehend the purport of her answer. She pleaded her inability to consider such an entirely unexpected proposition.

"Time, dear lady, time shall be granted you," replied he, in a tone which would not have misbecome Grandison himself.

She represented to him that he might have mistaken a momentary fancy for a serious inclination.

"Excuse me, madam, though not *very* old I am not quite so easily deceived as to the nature of my own sentiments."

"She entreated him to spare her:—she could not bring herself to consider such a proposal, for one moment, she would

not deceive any one, and in this case, she was sure she could hold out no hope.

At last, when his importunity had compelled her to use strong, almost angry language, Mr. Clackworth rose from his knee, with a very dejected aspect. "Well, my dear young lady," said he, "if it must be so, let us lay aside this matter for the present:—you *may* have better offers, it is true; you can have no more disinterested one than my own, I am sure; and I shall be only too happy to be permitted to resume the treaty at some future period, leaving you, in the mean time, to the unshackled exercise of your choice;—nor, after what you have said, shall I consider you are using me in the least disingenuously, should you form any other connexion."

Although firm in refusing such an ill-fancied suit, our heroine could not but be gratified and a little touched by the delicacy of this retreat, and she felt for the instant, how glad she would have been, if he would have consented to receive her as a daughter:—but she had already seen enough of him to know that, with respect to his age, he was touchy. She was therefore obliged to allow him to depart, with nothing more on her part, than the most general expressions of regard;—and when the door closed upon him, felt that another was added to the list of her already too numerous discomforts. Upon Mrs. Tyrell's return from chapel, she was surprised to find her inmate flushed and in tears.

"Why now,—what is all this about?" said the compassionate little woman—"this will never do!—red eyes!—and *such* a pulse! Why, Miss Aubrey, think of Tuesday—you must get well directly—what is to be done?"

Theresa did not attempt to answer her inquiries, but still wept.

"It must be that old tiresome Clackworth," continued Mrs. Tyrell, "I saw him coming hither this morning as smart as sixpence. What has he been saying to you?—nothing about Miss Randalls, I hope;—I was told that he had struck a bargain with Rugge of Exeter, and that she was seen yesterday, taking a place in the Delight. Come now, tell me what ails you?"

With this she sat down beside Theresa, and so beset her with surmises and guesses, that, at last, the secret of the manager's errand was extorted out of her very weariness.

"O mercy!" cried Mrs. Tyrell, springing up as if she had been shot, and running to the top of the stairs, "O mercy! did I ever hear the like!—Tyrell!—Bob Tyrell!—make haste, do

come up!—what do you think? that old bore Clackworth has been making an offer to Miss Aubrey!”

Sunday passed over with fearful rapidity, and, in spite of disturbed and vigilant night, Monday seemed to arrive sooner than ever Monday arrived before. Theresa was persuaded by Mrs. Tyrell to accompany them to the theatre in the evening. “It is so lonely being left alone,” said that lively woman, “and who knows whether Clackworth might not take the opportunity of bolting in upon you again?”

If being left alone was dull, the theatre was by no means brilliant. There was no one in the green-room, save the necessary complement of actors and their attendants; in fact, it was one of those evenings, the recurrence of which must form such a large item of ennui in every player's life:—when the house must be opened—but no one cares to perform his best, the lazy handful of audience, that have lounged in from idleness, or because their places cost them nothing. The play was the *Stranger*, that most lugubrious of all absurdities;—it seemed interminably long! and Mrs. Tyrell, whose husband performed the part of the hero, began to grow cold and hungry and would have gone home, “only they must wait for poor Bob,” so, sitting down listlessly, she fell asleep in the midst of some tale intended for Theresa's amusement. The candles which lighted the apartment were few and unsnuffed, and the huge dim shadows cast upon the walls and roof, recalled vividly to Theresa's memory the night scene of Mr. Lambwood's sick chamber, only two short years before, when his aspirations after fame had been first awakened—the night too of Reuben's dream.

“This will never do,” said she to herself, and rising hastily resolved to change the current of her thoughts, by watching the conclusion of the tragedy from the side scenes. As she left the green-room, her eye rested, for a moment on the neat little figure of her hostess—who sat bolt upright in her chair nodding her head—her eyes fast shut, and her mouth wide open—there was no one beside in the green-room just at that moment, save a squalid scene-shifter who was warming himself over the fire; nor sound to be heard, save the measured cadence of stage declamation, softened by distance. She approached the side scenes: “Every box full to-morrow!” said she to herself, casting her eyes dismayedly over the audience part of the house: “Why they will see now I tremble!—and tremble I am sure I shall, if there are any of *those* gentlemen in the stage boxes,”—then, she began to remember the look and gesture of Mrs. Siddons in that terrific sleep-walking scene

and, for the moment, thought that, to excite as deep emotions as she excited, she would cheerfully pass through the approaching ordeal—

There is another and a better world than this!

How strange that a sentence upon the stage, should so suddenly recall her thoughts *from* the stage!—but it was not the words themselves; so much as the tone in which they were uttered, that seemed to startle her as though they had proceeded from the mouth of an oracle. The voice was so hollow—so broken—so like the *real* gasp of death!—so different from Tyrell's usual voice!—and even while he was speaking, he fell so heavily—and lay so still!—A mist came over her eyes, as, dizzy with a fearful imagination, she clutched at the side scenes for support. And what stopped the performance?—was it—the prompter sprung forwards upon the stage. “A surgeon!—a doctor!—any one in the house?—It can only be a fit!”—became the general cry. In another instant an active young man had clambered across the orchestra, and was by the side of the prostrate man—he bent over him—there was a moment's dead silence—“Is it only a fit?—can nothing be done?” cried Theresa, rushing wildly forwards. “We must try,” was his answer, “but I am afraid it is too late!”

By this time the unusual cry and tumult upon the stage had penetrated to the green-room, and awakened Mrs. Tyrell. For an instant she remained stupefied, unable to gather up her scattered senses—then, the appalled spectators of this awful visitation of Providence, were thrilled by such a shriek, as had never before been heard within the walls of that house—as she staggered upon the stage towards the place where her husband lay, a lifeless corpse. Theresa was upon her knees supporting his head, (for they had not yet had time to think of removing him) and the wretched widow flung herself down beside him, reiterating her piercing and incoherent cries, which rung through the house, after the curtain had dropped before this tragedy of real life,—and the body of him so awfully summoned, had been carried into the green-room, where the suspicion that life was extinct, was confirmed into miserable certainty!

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A week elapsed—and the theatre was again opened and lighted up, for the benefit of Mademoiselle Chèvre, and the first appearance of the new Juliet. The awful calamity which had befallen “poor little Tyrell,” had suspended the amusements for seven short days,—but they were now to begin again, and actors to play their parts, and audiences to applaud, with as

much unconcern as if nothing had happened. This was a hard trial to Theresa, whose task it had been, during the last seven days, to watch the violence of the widow's grief,—as for soothing it, it was out of the question; you might as well have attempted to reason a storm out of its fury, as to persuade her to be calm and submissive under her affliction! and all that her friends could hope for her, was, that her distress would exhaust itself by its own intensity.

In the meantime every dead wall was again studded with colossal bills, announcing Mademoiselle Chèvre's three new dances, and the first appearance of Miss Aubrey—and with these were mingled placards with broad black borders, headed "Judgment on play-actors," in which Tyrell's untimely death was alluded to, or as some said *improved*, in the most strong and threatening language. The consequence was, that, by all these events, the interest of the public with respect to the evening's performances was carried to its highest point.

"Sir Harry Maristow, six places No. 1!" cried the busy box-keeper, admitting a party of gentlemen.

"Upon my word, here is a house, Clifton!" said one of them, taking a cool survey of the pit, which was crammed to suffocation, with upturned faces, all animated with the same eager curiosity.

"Ay—this must be a pleasant sight to Miss Randalls—"

"Why, the deuce! she is not here; is she?"

"Look yonder," replied Clifton, "immediately opposite to you, at that mass of scarlet and feathers—nay, you don't need your opera glass—yonder, between two men;—and laughing maliciously the hyena!—she is mistaken, however, if she thinks of seeing the failure of the new Juliet:—I am told that the girl is amazingly beautiful.—Why! by all that is ridiculous!—a bill!—some one give me a bill!—it cannot be!—yes it is—only see—the part of Romeo, for this night only, by Mr. Clackworth!"

"To replace poor little Tyrell, you know," said Maristow yawning. "After all, the old fellow makes up wonderfully well, if he were not so fat,—I fear we shall have a most melting comedy of it, when they come to the love-scenes; but Clifton, look at that devil Chèvre,—yonder,—close beside the prompter, laughing as if she had never laughed before;—gad! I'll take off my glove, and let her see my ring—'tis high time to put some bounds to the rapacity of these people!"

"Jermyn don't think so," replied Clifton, "look at him, close behind her, poor fellow!—waiting with her shawl; and looking only too thankful to her for not laughing at him. He

followed her to Exeter, you know—and they say, that he has bought up a hot-house full of forced flowers to shower upon her when she comes on in the last dance: and has hired six gardeners to stand in the flies with baskets full of his purchase." A general laugh followed this anecdote.

"I wish those young gentlemen would attend to the play," growled a gruff cit in the next box, who had no idea of losing a syllable spoken upon the stage:—and sat between his daughters, two large girls, "who looked so eager and delighted," so Maristow said, "as if they would eat the entire scene, Clackworth and all."

"A 'tough morsel he would be," responded Clifton. "Attend to the play! why, we are attending to it, and furnishing a running commentary on the entertainment worth the price of our seats twice over!—Ah! here she comes at last!—beautiful!—beautiful!—beau—"—his words were drowned in the thunder of applause, "which," to borrow the phraseology of the press, "greeted the trembling aspirant to theatrical honours on her entrance."

Indeed a more lovely creature than Theresa Grafton had never trod those well accustomed boards. Her dress of pale blue silk did full justice to her perfect figure, and the blush which timidity, amounting almost to terror, had called up on her cheek, showed in brilliant contrast the one large white lily, placed amongst her dark curls with such consummate art, that it seemed as if blown there by some Fairy tired of her cradle. She stood betwixt the Lady Capulet and the nurse, breathless and almost sightless with fear, nor did the reiterated plaudits restore her to self-possession. She would have given worlds to have hidden herself,—she felt as if she must burst into a passion of tears. But she controlled herself, advanced twice, and attempted to speak;—her voice seemed to have lost its tone. She constrained herself to make a third attempt, when her eye, glancing involuntarily downwards towards the pit, encountered in the foremost row of faces, strained with attention, an object which totally overthrew her remaining presence of mind—for, with a pleading gesture of her hands, which she then pressed convulsively to her eyes, she tottered backwards a few paces, and feebly ejaculating "Merciful Heavens!"—fell fainting into the arms of her stage mother.

She had met the face of her brother!—she had recognised those large wild eyes of his—those expressive features, now ghastly pale and thin;—she had seen him rise, and stretch out his hand—and heard as much as, "Theresa! Theresa! the Lord hath sent me!"—she was conscious of nothing more.



"A madman! a madman! turn him out!" was the cry which rose from all parts of the house. "The confusion became tremendous; while the Randalls leaned back in her box, enjoying the scene with all her evil heart.

"Turn him out!"—Reuben seemed disposed to resist this summary expulsion. "What!" cried he, with solemn vehemence, "when I have journeyed so far to do the will of Him that sent me, shall I be refused a hearing? shall I——"

"Out with him!—no sermons here!—out! out!"

But the excitement of his inward purpose, and the novelty and bewilderment of the scene, had already produced a dreadful effect upon Reuben's over-heated brain, and imparted a ferocity to his resistance, which made his expulsion from that dense and angry mass of people, a matter of much difficulty. He struggled most furiously, and continued shouting his wild anathemas and warnings, till he was fairly thrust out by main force, and given into the custody of a constable.

Fortunately for Theresa, the confusion had subsided before she was sufficiently restored to be led upon the stage again—but the vision she had seen had entered her soul, and it was with positive indifference to the presence of the spectators, whose applause was, if possible, doubled upon her re-appearance, that she mechanically resumed the business of her part.

It mattered not:—the tide of popular feeling had set in so strongly in her-favour, that in spite of her coldness—in spite of the ridiculous appearance of a sexegenarian Romeo, "who looked," as Clifton said, "like a Bologna sausage upon its knees,"—in spite of the incomparable flights and pirouettes of Mademoiselle Chèvre in a dance, introduced into the Masquerade scene,—Theresa's success was undisputedly triumphant. Her want of animation was ascribed to an excess of sensibility—her occasional lapses of memory to industry, which had bewildered itself with over assiduity. In vain she attempted to rally her spirits,—the glare of that warning and almost supernatural countenance was before her, as clearly, as the sun is discernible to the shut eyes of those who have just looked upon him.

"Upon my word, Bellasys," said Clifton at last, weary of applauding, "I never saw such a bewitching creature in the whole course of my life!—but what can be the matter with her?—she must have been dosing herself with opium."

"I hope she has not begun to follow the fashions of her predecessors;—but never mind, never mind!—she's the true thing, depend upon it—I'll bet a thousand to one upon her.—Did you notice the respectful distance at which she kept Clackworth?"

—and ha! ha! ha! that is good! Exeunt the Randalls and her familiars; being positively her last appearance this season.”

“Maristow told me,” said Clifton, “that she sent fifty men into the pit and gallery to hiss; but what has become of Maristow?”

“Gone behind the scenes:—I never missed him before. They seem disposed to make us wait for the next act—come, Clifton, let us go too.”

“Thank goodness,” said the cit in the next box, “those noisy sparks are gone at last! Make a little more room, Lizzy, I am so cramped with sitting, and let us enjoy ourselves.”

“Pa,” said Lizzy, “do you think her apron’s real lace?—Gracious, Kate! how you trod on my toe.”

“Pa,” inquired Kate, “do you think there will be any more rows?”

Meanwhile the plot behind the scenes was thickening fast—the green-room was crowded with men, all eager to pay their court to the new Juliet—too happy to run for an ice, or a fan, to be permitted to open and shut windows—too ready to bring a perfect flood of all the *eaux*, from all the perfumers’ shops round about, in the twinkling of an eye, for the refreshment of the queen of the night. Theresa was certainly very ill, and feared she should never be able to go through with her part.

“Really, madam,” said the Romeo—“consider my interest—the young man is in kind hands at this present moment, I can assure you. Pray, Miss Aubrey, *try* to be a little better!—this is quite sad.”

“Sad! you old raven!” cried one of the most assiduous of the flatterers:—“after such a *debut*!”

“Do you mean to insult me, behind my own scenes?” cried Clackworth, raising his cane,—“get out, Sir!”

“Perfectly right! very spirited!” exclaimed another, stepping into the post, which the insolent fop was compelled to vacate:—“Ah, Page, you blockhead, did you mean to be all night in bringing those ices?—Now, Miss Aubrey, allow me to assist you —”

“None, thank you,” replied Theresa, “I am better now, I think.”

“Cheer up, madam!” said Clackworth, “there are only two acts more. Hatk! I doubt we shall be mobbed, if we don’t go on.”

“Only!” sighed the agitated girl—“well,—they will be over some time or other.”

“What a delightful creature!” cried Clifton, “and she lodges with little Tyrall, somebody said. Ha! Maristow!—

and in this corner too! you, the squire of dames!—Has Miss Aubrey been playing the Medusa upon you, that you can neither speak nor stir?"

"Leave me alone!" was his friend's laconic answer.

"With all my heart: I love the light, and will stay in it!—How—she is gone! By Jove, what a cannonade of applause!—it's quite sublime! I'll go back to my place. I suppose, Maristow, I shall find you here when all is over."

"Maristow's *bit*!" observed Ballasys, seizing Clifton's arm, "come away! or we shall be too late for the scream when she drinks the poison."

The play went on with increasing *éclat*:—the crowd in the green-room received fresh additions every moment, from those who were anxious to hail the new star which had arisen so splendidly. Rumour, in the meantime, told how Mademoiselle Chèvre was in *such* a fury, and had cuffed her dresser till she was black and blue! and how the Randalls had been seen to vanish into a hackney-coach, in a paroxysm of wrath. The last act seemed like an eternity to Maristow, who still kept close in his corner—but it went over. Theresa was supported from the stage, more dead than alive, and as she must pass through the green-room to her dressing-room, the crowd pressed eagerly round her, each ready to offer some compliment or congratulation. But one forced his way to her side, as quick as lightning—a well known voice said, "Lean on me! dear Miss Grafton, dear Theresa!—I will keep these people off!"—and the queen of the night fell senseless into the arms of Talbois!

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### PART III.

#### AFTER MARRIAGE.

"And was she not vara weel off,  
That was woo'd and married and a'?"

*Scot's Song*

AUTUMN was now fast waning:—but, in the richest district of the south-west of England, where that glorious season always seems inclined to dispute the supremacy of winter, the country had not begun to wear that aspect of bare cheerlessness, which even makes the magic of bright days of none avail.

The trees were yet garnished with a moderate clothing of foliage—the fields had not yet lost all their green—and the air, though freshened by a tinge of frost, was not so sharp as to compel a couple of travellers, with whom my tale has to do, to journey with the windows of their carriage closed.

"We are very near Maris Priors now," said the gentleman, "you may see its woods from the top of the next ascent, and if the leaves are thin enough, the chimneys of the old house. It is romantic enough to suit even you, Theresa. How surprised my mother will be!"

"She will have received your letter, I hope," replied Theresa.

"Just, and only just!—last night at the earliest,—and as she is one of those deliberate persons whose motions, compared with those of the modern world, are as one is to twenty-four,—we shall find her in the very bloom of her first astonishment."

Theresa sighed—there was something about this picture which made her thoughtful.

"Nay, now, you are not to go and terrify yourself with the idea of encountering a perfect petrification in your mother-in-law. She has strong, warm feelings, I assure you; and if you find in her too much of the clock, you must even set it against the superabundance of quicksilver you have discovered in me. —One thing, however, Theresa,—we sink the fact of *Miss Aubrey's* first and only appearance in the part of Juliet—you understand me?"

Theresa did understand him, and made no answer.

"Are not these noble trees?" (they were now on the point of entering the gates), "Sir Talbois Maristow was a good fellow, after all, for he would not allow a stick of them to be touched; and that silver line, yonder, is a branch of the river, famous for its wild fowl. You need not tremble so, my love. Remember, you are going home."

The carriage rolled on, and stopped,—before the door of such a majestic old house as Theresa thought could have existed only in a romance. Maris Priors was a very ancient mansion, but in a perfect state of preservation; a sort of irregular composition of bell-towers, oriels, and gables; half Moorish, half Elizabethan. A long flight of steps, encroached upon by bay trees and myrtles, such as are never seen in the north, led to the front door, in the shade of which stood that very venerable and somewhat awful person, Theresa's mother-in-law.

The Honourable Mrs. Talbois would have been a striking-looking woman at any time, or in any place, but appeared most particularly so, at the head of the establishment of Maris Pri-

ors. She was very tall and thin,—her hair, though gray, carefully dressed, and her cheek, although wrinkled, as soft and blooming as it had been at thirty. Her hazel eyes were large, and peculiarly quiet,—their expression, however, was the placidity of firmness, and not of gentleness. She was one of those inflexible persons, who never break their word, never yield a point, never lose their tempers—one who ruled, without appearing to rule: and being tolerably exempt from weakness herself, had no toleration in her mind, for the short-comings of her neighbours. She was charitable in the matter of alms, and devout after the formal fashion of the Lady Bountifuls of old times:—but her mind had been early narrowed by the prejudices of her station, which she had found so perfectly consonant with her nature, that she had never made any attempt to enlarge the sphere of her perceptions or pleasures. She mixed readily in society, with those of her own order:—had built a church and endowed a school, but was a total stranger to the idea of extending her sympathies beyond her husband's estate, and the circle of her own family connexions—to each of whom, according to his nearness of kindred, she extended a proper measure of regard and consideration.

Such was Mrs. Talbois. She descended two or three steps, advanced, and took Theresa's hands between her own but did not kiss her. "You are welcome to Maris Priors," said she, in a tone of the utmost suavity:—"though my son has given me so short a notice of your coming, that I have not been able to prepare for your reception, as I could have wished."

She then embraced her son with great affection, and whispered a word or two in his ear; "Would you not like, Lady Harry, to go at once to your own apartments? Jones, attend your mistress." So Theresa was led off alone to take possession of her new domain: whilst her mother-in-law detained her husband to hear "all about it."

The house within was as comfortable as it was picturesque, and stately without. Every corridor and chamber showed a goodly phalanx of family pictures—some panelled into the walls, grim and antique, and bearing such an inscription, as

Syr Dale Maristo, Ob. March 1st, A. D. 1444.

Pray for his soule.

some from the more recent pencils of Kneller and Reynolds. The splendour and extent of the mansion through which she was led, and the numerous tokens of family pride and aristocracy which met her at every step, at once excited and depressed

Theresa. She could not help feeling as a nameless interloper into so noble and haughty a family, as one, whose presence might be thought to degrade that venerable place: she began to think of the suddenness of her marriage, after Talbois' long desertion, of which he had offered no account: of the distance of his mother's greeting—of the caution she had lately received to conceal her late adventures:—then too, she felt wearied and exhausted:—in short, let no bride lift up her voice against her, as fanciful and unthankful, when it is told that she absolutely threw herself into a magnificent easy chair, with a tear or two upon her cheek.

A knock at the door made her rise, and dry them hastily. It was her husband.

"Well, my love," said he, "how do you like your new quarters?"

"What a question to ask!" replied his wife, attempting to resume her old lively manner;—"sumptuous! magnificent! a place to dream of, or to read of in a romance."

"O, my love, we are done with romance now:—you know it is all ended when the lovers are married. We have nothing else to do, but to sit down, and be respectable country gentleman and country lady, for the remainder of our days."

"I shall make a poor lady," said the happy woman, cheered by his gaiety, and forgetting her late fancy that he was changed since she first knew him, and how strange it was, that after all, she should be his wife!

"We must do our best, my mother is the least in the world of a disciplinarian, and will be sorely disappointed if we are not dignified and aristocratic; she is already teasing herself to think how your circle of acquaintances is to be made select enough."

"Ah! if she only knew!"—

"Theresa, she must *not* know," replied her husband decidedly, "she is already aware that you have no relations. As to any questions about family, I will answer them, and she is such a perfect Lady Pedigree that she is certain to catechise you. Had I married to please her, the wooing must have been carried on in a coach and six at least, and, after two years of parleying, the ceremony performed by special licence, in the presence of the representatives of at least six noble houses—I want her to love you; and to make her do so, you must humour her prejudices."

"But, Sir Harry, no relations!—poor Reuben—"

"He is in kind hands—Dr. Barnes undertook to send us a weekly account of his health—and—"

"Is Sir Harry here?" said a servant at the door.

"Wanted again?—O the delights of being a country gentleman!" and so saying, he made his exit hastily; while his wife returned to her easy chair to ponder on what he had said.

"He is certainly changed," thus ran her thoughts, "since we met last:—I do not feel as if I knew him as well as I used to do—but, no wonder! It is very painful, though, to have to begin by concealing my origin, and all out of respect to the idle prejudices of his mother. Will she receive me as a daughter after all! and how all this makes me feel my want of practice in the ways of the world! And what am I to do!—to confess my ignorance, is to make myself her slave—to show it, is to make her my enemy—and Sir Harry, through her. Sir Harry!—that I cannot think of my husband without his title! it is very strange! So then, I must learn in self-defence to be worldly, and common-place, and stupid, if I would retain my husband's affections:—yet who used to declaim so loudly against castes as he did! His affections! am I sure that I possess them now! that I have not been married out of the fancy of the moment?" and then the old theatre gossip about Mademoiselle Chèvre and her ring occurred to her. "How foolish this is! to sit tormenting myself with such fancies—things may after all turn out better than I expect."

The current of her thoughts was changed, by the entrance of the neatest of all abigails, who came to inquire "if her Ladyship would not dress for dinner," and the bride applied herself to the business of the toilette, in some little confusion. The respectful service of her attendant fluttered her; she became nervously alive to the scantiness of her wardrobe, but her marriage had been so sudden! I shall make a poor lady!" repeated Theresa to herself.

She descended to dinner with a throbbing heart, and here her anxieties were redoubled; there was so much state to which she had not been accustomed, and her awful mother-in-law, she was sure, was taking circumstantial notice of all those little uncertainties in her manner which were the inevitable consequence of the sudden change in her condition. Many a time before the table was cleared, did she sigh to herself, as she thought how comfortable the Tyrells lived, and of the *pigeon for her benefit*. But her husband was an exceeding assistance. He talked on, and filled up all gaps and dry places; and when the ladies rose from the table, insisted upon taking Theresa upon the terrace to see the house by the light of the rising moon, though his mother remarked upon it as "a very rash step; Lady Harry could see everything deliberately in the morning."

Yet, in spite of all his liveliness, in spite of the adroitness with which he seemed to keep his wife and mother from coming to close quarters, Theresa began to feel *sure* that he was changed, and grown more worldly, though she was angry at herself again and again for allowing the least suspicion to darken so fair a prospect as was set before her. Alas! she did not then know that she owed her present exaltation, *in part*, to an immense wager laid between Clifton and Maristow;—the former in ignorance of their acquaintance when Talbois had been the Worralls' guest, having concluded that the splendid offers of the Duke of ——— would outweigh the minor graces of the Baronet. The latter took the bet eagerly;—it was the last trifle which decided his wavering resolution. The lady returned the Duke's proposals unopened: which proceeding, scandal said, had produced such a stimulating effect upon his simple Grace's passion, that he doubled his first terms, and went in person to urge his suit. Before he arrived at her door, however, the wager was won, and the bride upon her way to Maris Priors.

A month had scarcely reconciled Theresa to the magnificence of her new abode,—the strangeness of being, after all, Lady Maristow, to the awfulness of Mrs. Talbois as a mother-in-law. The scheme of life to which she was now introduced was so different from any previous experience—the part she had to play so prominent a one, that between her wonder and her perplexities, she was constantly in a state of low fever. Her natural independence of mind was the first thing which returned to her assistance. She began to venture to maintain her own opinions, and, encouraged by the attention she received, to look a little more originally on men and manners than the Honourable Lady thought *becoming*. O that word *becoming*! it was pressed into service upon all occasions. Ere long, wearied out by the monotony of her mother-in-law's discourse, Theresa could not help occasionally trying, whether her old nature had, by disuse, become entirely rusted. Little arguments were the consequence, maintained on both sides with the utmost gentleness, but which tended inevitably to an alienation of the proud woman of rank, from her free-spoken, and not very submissive, daughter-in-law.

Amongst the many who came from far and near to pay their courtesies to the new Lady of Maris Priors, was a certain Mrs. Chester Younge,—in Theresa's opinion, the pleasantest visitor she had yet received, because she was the most original, and least ceremonious. She had been an officer's daughter and his companion in foreign parts: she used to boast that she had gone



through as many adventures by field and flood, as would fill a novel,—and had retained, even to middle age, a spirit of adventure which the most highly polished refused to recognize as correct. She paid a very long call, and was so graciously received, that in spite of the freezing looks of Mrs. Talbois, she repeated her visit before the bride had returned her first. The second interview was yet pleasanter than the former one had been. Their talk was of spectacles and public places, a dangerous, yet delightful subject to Theresa. Maris Priors was not far from Exeter, where Mademoiselle Chèvre had been repeating her performances with increased effect.

"You have seen the Chèvre, Lady Maristow?" inquired Mrs. Younge.

"I have," replied Theresa, with a slight smile, as she remembered *where* and *how*.

"And is she not amazing? I have seen many good dancers in my time, but nothing to compare with her *Pas de papillon*; nay, I was so entirely fascinated by her, that, rather than miss her last appearance, I positively went to Exeter in our market cart;—now don't, dear Mrs. Talbois, *don't* look so shocked!"

"Where was Colonel Chester Younge?" inquired Mrs. Talbois, gravely.

"Where? before me, driving;—the carriage horses were ill; and what else could I do? I believe that the Boniface of the White Lion thought we were both of us crazy when we rattled into the yard.

"O how delightful!" exclaimed Theresa, naturally.

"Yes, she *is* delightful! but I am told that all her sense lies in the points of her toes. Colonel Bellasys tells me that she is a vain, stupid, and malicious woman."

"Like all the rest of her class," interposed Mrs. Talbois.

"Pardon me," replied Mrs. Younge, who loved a discussion, and did *not* love the Dowager; "*not* like all the rest of her class—as I myself have experienced;—I met Madame Rombot often when we were last in Paris."

"Met her—a common dancer—in private society!"

Even so,—in the very first circles! and I found her one of the most charming and cultivated women I ever met. Now you terrify me, Mrs. Talbois, you look so displeased;—and I see my carriage coming round—*à la bonne heure*. Good morning, dear Madam, and forgive me, if you can. Good morning, Lady Harry; we shall meet often, and be great friends, I hope. I do not put myself out of my way to call upon all my new neighbours, I assure you."

"That is a most absurd woman," said Mrs. Talbois, when the door had closed upon her vivacious guest.

"Dear Madam, how?"

"How? Lady Harry! I am surprised at the question. She is decidedly the most absurd woman,—*not* of my acquaintance though,—for she never put herself out of the way to call upon *me*."

"I am sorry that you do not like her," replied Theresa; "for I thought I had secured one agreeable neighbour at last. Chester Grange is not far: that white house among the trees, some one said, is it not?"

"It is;—but I was never there;—Mrs. Younge's proceedings are quite remarkable, and such as I hope no relation of mine intends to countenance. But she is one of your *reading* women, and sets up for a character; and, like the rest of them, is extremely deficient in the becoming proprieties of manner."

"*Becoming* again?" said Theresa to herself, and bent down over her netting, to conceal her dissentient countenance.

"It is well," continued Mrs. Talbois, "that the class to which she belongs is a small one. Heaven forbid that it should increase! The admission of such persons into good society is one of the most alarming signs of the times."

"But Mrs. Younge is very amusing, and seems clever;—really almost the only visitor I have received whom I have wished to see ever again. Now only compare her with that proper, polite, empty Lady Henbury. Yes, I hope we *shall* be great friends."

This was throwing down the glove with a vengeance; and Mrs. Talbois took it up with all due solemnity.

"I am sorry, Lady Harry," said she, more slowly than usual, "to discover in you such lightness of thought on a subject of such importance as the choice of your society. The grave, the polished, the high-born must, in these days, I know, give way to the free-thinking and the *parvenus*."

Theresa blushed deeply;—not with fear.

"But I hoped that *you* would not renounce the credit and dignity of associating with such;—that *you* would not break down old barriers, for the mere sake of amusing yourself."

"I hope not, either," replied Theresa, earnestly, stirred by the emphasis on a word which she felt was pointed at her; "but, I must say, that as far as society goes, I should prefer originality to dulness, and would rather meet with genius,—ay, even accompanied with rudeness of manner,—than the most courtly common-place personage that ever stepped out of a coach-and-four. I am warm, because I plead for myself. I

shall never attain to that polish and experience in etiquette which is the appendage of birth; but I can appreciate the other, and I trust I shall meet with it. I warned your son that I should make a poor lady!"

Mrs. Talbois made no reply, and continued displeasedly silent till the entrance of a servant, with some parcels from a neighbouring town, called down the one lady from her pedestal, and called back the other from the wanderings of her fancy.

"Bless me!" cried the Dowager, examining an envelope on which something caught her eye, "my son's marriage! On Monday, the 30th of September—ay, here it is!—how odd that I should have never seen it before!—to Miss Theresa Grafton—they have omitted 'of Maris Priors,' I see,—and it is no among the marriages, either;—what is this next paragraph?—upon my word!—"

Just at this moment, Sir Harry made his appearance with a brace of birds in his hand. The newspaper was laid down, and the game admired.

"They are for Mrs. Chester Younge," said he; "she complains that her husband is the worst shot in the county, and never killed or wounded anything that she knows of, save the tip of his game-keeper's nose, which he shot off by mistake."

"A most improbable invention, and very like Mrs. Chester Younge," said his mother, sitting down again, and mechanically taking up the paper. "O—here—'New Juliet,'—this was what I was beginning to read, when your coming in interrupted us. Lady Harry, I am sorry to see you stoop so over your netting."

Sir Harry approached the table slyly; but his mother held the paper fast in both hands, and began to read aloud:—"New Juliet,—On Tuesday last;—what is the date?—Oh, I see,—Monday, October second,—'On Tuesday last, the inhabitants of our city, famed for its accomplishments, were edified by one of those exhibitions called debuts, which the uninstructed hazard through impudence, and the gullible public endure. The young person, who was selected as the probable rival to Mrs. Siddons, and who, we are informed on the most unquestionable authority, has studied the art of declamation in some Ranter's tabernacle, having been claimed as a run-away daughter by a mad Methodist, (whose performance in the pit was, in our opinion, infinitely better than the young lady's upon the stage)—this young person, we say, showed a degree of audacity in attempting to appear before a discriminating and critical audience, which it is high time that the press—that guardian of public taste—should expose; and we are resolved, though ours should be the only voice lifted up, to condemn as fla-

*grant a piece of imposture as ever disgraced the annals of the stage, to follow the course which we have hitherto pursued through evil report and good report, and to speak the stern and unvarnished truth."*

"That is very stupid stuff, mother," said Sir Harry, interrupting her.

"Well, there is not much more of it—and there is something about Maristow at the bottom,—you shall have it directly."

"Theresa, those balsams of yours are dying for want of water."

"I am busy just now," replied she, "I cannot attend to them;"—and, as she spoke, looked up full in his face. He bit his lip, till it grew as white as clay, and stood with the parlour door in his hand, uncertain whether to go or stay.

"Where was I?" resumed the methodical Mrs. Talbois,—  
*"O, I have found the place—the plain unvarnished truth. We beg to assure this young person (for we will not misuse language so far as to call her lady,) that we shall be happy to recommend her to a situation in the wardrobe,—she was tastefully dressed, we frankly allow. As to attempting the characters of tragedy—and O, could no less daring a flight have served her, than at Shakespeare?—or comedy,—or any part beyond that of chamber-maid in a farce,—it is as ridiculous as it is an impudent piece of presumption, which will and shall meet with the contempt and condemnation it deserves."*

"This is too bad!" exclaimed Sir Harry with an oath, banging the door behind him as he went.

"Upon my word!—My son is in a passion at something or other,—his new boots, perhaps—Where did I leave off?—condemnation it deserves. *We are of no party—we are devoid of party prejudices, and have no interest in telling the truth, beyond the reward of our own consciences: but we may be permitted to express some wonder, in which we hope our readers will join us, at a rumour which has been noised abroad, that our old friend and favourite, Miss Randalls,—who has drawn tears from eyes unused to weep, as the injured Desdemona—who has made many a stout heart thrill by her terrific impersonation of Lady Macbeth, and whose Rosalind is before us as we write, as perfect a vision of female loveliness and intelligence as ever alighted on this earth of ours—has been discharged in the most hasty and ungentlemanly manner to make way for this baby-faced heroine. If this be true, we are sure that the public will sympathize in our honest indignation. While we are yet writing, another report has this instant reached us,—that the heroine has descended from the stage, having already played her*

*cards so well as to take in a certain young Baronet ; we should guess by his choice, not overburdened with brains. We give him our hearty thanks, whoever he may be. Perhaps Sir H——y Mar-st—w, who was seen in the green-room, entranced by the manifold perfections of the new Juliet, will be kind enough to charge himself with the trouble of conveying them to the happy bridegroom."*

Mrs. Talbois laid down the paper without any note or comment, and then sternly and deliberately fixed her large eyes upon her daughter-in-law's face; with an expression of such quiet and intense scorn, such as Theresa had never been exposed to before. But the bride was as proud in her way as the haughty woman of family:—and did not quail in the least, beneath her steady gaze.

"Is there any more?" she asked.

"More—Madam—more! good heavens!" said Mrs. Talbois, rising:—"is there not enough?—I knew that my son had matched himself beneath his rank,—but I did not expect this, I must confess! You are detected, Madam!—your early history is revealed!—and you are not ashamed!"

"Yes, Madam!" replied Theresa, a sudden and most indignant expression lighting up every feature, "I *am* ashamed, when I see that birth and rank do not restrain their possessors from employing the language of insult. I *should* be ashamed of having been raised to the station I occupy, if such narrow and ungenerous feelings were to take possession of me in turn. But I trust that I have learned better things—"

She checked herself suddenly, and rising, confronted her incensed mother-in-law face to face.

"I have suffered much," said that proud woman, "but, Heaven knows, that this is the hardest of any trial that I have been called upon to endure! But such is the style of the day—and your language, Madam, is only what I should have expected from your education. I leave you to study your *tirades* in peace,—for I shall not sleep under a roof so degraded, another night."

Our heroine's indignation was now softened by such a feeling of concern as makes us pity the weakness of an inferior mind. She was by much too high-minded to retain anything beyond a momentary resentment against prejudices and unkind language, were not so much pointed against herself as against the class to which she had belonged; and endeavoured if possible, to mollify the sternness of her mother-in-law, and induce her to change her resolution. She represented to her, that she was ready to pay her all reasonable duty; that if she had spoken warmly, it was but from the excitement of the moment—

that such a separation in the outset in married life, would give her the utmost pain—that on Sir Harry's account—

"Reasonable duty!" repeated Mrs. Talbois in a tone of the most quiet cutting irony—"so then, you *do* want my countenance?—No, Madam! I leave you, and for ever."

And with a step as stately as queen Elizabeth's own, she swept out of the room, and assembling her own servants, gave them orders to prepare for her instant departure. Her household, accustomed to nothing but the most measured and foreseen movements on the part of their mistress, were amazed beyond measure at her sudden resolution. Her maid ventured to remonstrate;—her son, though very angry, besought her. The old lady was firm,—and hardly vouchsafed a reply to his representations and entreaties. She possessed a jointure house at the distance of a half a day's journey from Maris Priors, and thither she retired in sullen grandeur; declaring, in the most calm and resolute manner, that its doors should never be opened to her son, nor to the person, by marrying whom, he had inflicted such indelible disgrace upon an old, and 'till then stainless name.'

This sudden and public breach with Mrs. Talbois was a serious cause of unhappiness to Theresa; who could not help fearing for the future peace and confidence of a married life thus inauspiciously begun. But, for the present, her presentiment seemed uncalled for. The dowager's departure was the signal for all the gayer part of the neighbours round about, to come and pay their court to the lovely lady of Maris Priors, now a queen without a rival: and Sir Harry, who delighted in change, was entirely satisfied with the liveliness of his house, and the success in society which his wife obtained. She was so *new*, (her visitors declared,) so charming, so unspoilt,—and yet so cultivated; and then her taste was amazing, her opinion in every art oracular;—no wonder that Mrs. Talbois was envious of her beauty and intellect! How narrow-minded of her to quarrel with Lady Harry on such a trifling ground!—how blind to leave so splendid an establishment for the dulness of Brandfield! The tide of popular sympathy, then, ran along with her who had most to give: her words were repeated, her dress imitated;—and those who were competent judges, prophesied, that let her be once seen in London, and she would be, without doubt, installed among the leaders and lights of the fashionable world.

But the bride was rather sickened than corrupted by this excess of admiration. She felt the falseness of the homage administered through her, to her house, and her gardens, and

her parties : an old puritanical love of truth continued to cleave to her, in spite of the intoxications of her prosperous lot. Nor could she be diverted from lamenting the difference between her husband and his mother ;—and with the same sweetness of temper, which had made her so long and so patiently endure Reuben's harsh treatment, made one or two unsuccessful attempts to be reconciled to the lonely woman, who had withdrawn herself to a private and monotonous life, and whose health, rumour said, was sensibly yielding to the influence of chagrin. The old lady, strong in the belief of her own consequence, imagined that her overtures were prompted by a natural want of counsel and support, and haughtily refused to receive them. At last, Theresa bathought her that a temporary absence from that part of the country might be of use,—and proposed to Sir Harry to pass the months of January and February in Paris, previous to commencing their London campaign. He assented readily, for he too, was by this time, satiated with the neighbourhood.

One person only Theresa felt sorry to leave, and wished to see again—the much reviled Mrs. Chester Younge,—the only person who had paid her no extravagant compliments,—and expected to receive as much attention as she gave. It was with mutual regret that the two ladies parted, and with mutual pleasure that they anticipated meeting again in London.

Before they left England, Theresa persuaded Sir Harry to permit her to call at the establishment in which Reuben had been placed for the restoration of his sanity. This was a retired and very pleasant spot in the quietest part of Hampshire, and at a distance from any high road. The superintendent, a mild, middle-aged man of few words, spoke most encouragingly of his patient. The extreme violence of Reuben's distemper had subsided, under the influence of quietness and medical treatment : and he was already so much recovered as to be allowed the free range of the garden and fields with which the house was surrounded. He seemed to find a child's pleasure in the open air, and the presence of natural objects, and as far as could be judged, was happy and undisturbed by any remembrances of the past. He would wander up and down from morning till night, singing fanciful hymns, and noticing any children, that happened to come in his way, with great interest. Dr. Barnes held out great hopes that he might ultimately be restored to a sound state of mind, as he had already showed symptoms of steady pursuit, in wishing to make a garden in a small hollow, not far from the house, where he spent the greatest part of every fair day. Theresa expressed a most

earnest wish to see him; and the doctor, though doubtful of the result of such an interview, consented.

It was one of those beautifully still sunshiny days which so often occur before Christmas:—such a day as disposes the mind to peaceful thought. Theresa, much soothed by so satisfactory an account, followed the doctor through the garden, and across a crisp meadow-field, from which the hoar-frost of the morning had not altogether disappeared. At the end of the path was a style, half-hidden among pollard oaks loaded with ivy.

"Close behind those is his haunt," said her conductor. "I dare say that we shall find him very busy.—Hark! you may hear him singing. My people will have it that he makes his hymns himself—and I never heard them from any one else."

They paused to listen; and heard a tuneful though broken voice from beneath the further side of the hedge:—

Our God who speaks,—and wild winds blow,  
Who measures out the showers,  
And sendeth angels to and fro  
To deck the earth with flowers;  
That God shall hear my prayer!

Our God beholds the winged seed  
Hid in its earthly cell,  
He doth all living creatures heed  
In earth or air that dwell;  
And he shall hear my prayer!

"You hear how gentle he is; but we will not startle him by coming suddenly upon him." The doctor advanced quietly, and called to him: "Reuben, just come over the style, I want to speak to you; I have brought a friend to see you."

"Is it the gardener with the roots?" replied the voice of her brother, as, rising from his spade, he looked over the hedge. Theresa could hardly believe that the peaceful face, which gazed upon her gay attire with a pleased and wistful look, was the same which she had last beheld so fearfully agitated. He wore his shirt collar open, and a cap of dark cloth upon his head which had been shaved, which gave even a boyish, and certainly not an unpleasant air to his figure.

"What have you brought this gay lady here for? my garden is only a making. You might have at least waited till my tulips came up."

Theresa lifted up her veil slowly: "Do you know me now, Reuben?" said she as composedly as she could.



"Know you!" cried he joyfully; "wait till I come over the style and you shall see!—why, Theresa,—have you really come to look at my garden?" and he vaulted over the style nimbly and embraced her again and again. "How good you are to come and see me! where have you been this long, long time? nay, look at my dirty hands on your cloak; I am very sorry—I will go in and wash them."

And seizing her by the hand, he dragged her hastily towards the house, showing such joy at her presence, as a child would have done, "You are looking very well, my Reuben," said she fondly, "I hope you are happy here?"

"O very happy," was his answer, with a contented smile, "if it please the Lord to prosper my garden; and without his blessing all my labour will be vain. And did you say you were going to Paris? by the time you come back you shall see *such* a change!—I will make an arbour on purpose for you to sit in, and call it "Theresa's bower;" and my linnets shall build there, if the Lord pleases. And so you are married too! But here I am losing all the best of the day; can't you come back with me to my valley, Theresa?"

"No, my dear Reuben—I cannot—I must go now: but I will return again very soon."

"Not too soon—for I should like to surprise you: give me another kiss,—do you say your prayers morning and evening? ah, I am beginning to recollect—"

As he spoke, a strange frown began to darken his brow; and doctor Barnes, seeing that some chord had been struck which recalled unpleasant associations, made a sign to Theresa that the interview had been long enough. The brother and sister again embraced and parted: she, for the gaiety and stir of Paris, and he, with his heart and mind fully bent upon the little garden in the vale. But all that day, he would stop suddenly in the midst of his labour, and resting on his spade, remain for a few moments in some painful reverie. His attendant watched him with anxiety, for it was feared that this meeting might be productive of a slight relapse: however, he returned as often to his work with "Ah, well! I can't remember—as the Lord pleases,"—and the visit of his sister, by the next morning, was only alluded to with delight and hope for its repetition "when he had finished his garden."

We shall pass rapidly over the time spent by Sir Harry Maristow and his wife in Paris, and only mention generally, that from the time Theresa was thrown entirely upon her husband's society, their paths might be said to begin to diverge. And was she happy? The negative may be fully and fairly an-

answered. Not certain of the continuance of her husband's affection; not satisfied with her own state of mind; so many old landmarks having been destroyed, so few new ones supplied: she *could* not surely be happy.

One adventure, however, must be recorded which befel Theresa during the last week of their stay in that city of gaiety. She was driving alone down one of the Boulevards, when her attention was arrested by a carriage moving in the same direction, which contained an English face familiar to her. This belonged to an elderly young gentleman dressed in a lively cinnamon coloured coat, with a powdered head and large nosegay of choice flowers in his button-hole; a lace frill to his shirt, and a celestial blue satin waistcoat. She was sure that the owner of all these elegancies could be no other than her former friend and admirer, Mr. Clackworth; but who then was his companion? It was some seconds before even her quick eye could pick out a face from the mass of rich furs which surrounded her throat, and under the panoply of her enormous vale; and when she did discover it, Theresa gave such an involuntary cry of amazement, as awakened the attention of her neighbours—the carriages being now almost close together,—and the beau, calling upon his charioteer to stop, exclaimed: “Angels and ministers of grace! Anna Maria, love, do you not see your old friend Miss Aubrey, Lady Maristow?”

The *ci-devant* Mrs. Tyrell also thought proper to express her astonishment and pleasure in a scream. The carriages stopped, and their occupants shook hands with great cordiality; Theresa secretly hoping that no evil chance would direct her husband that way.

“Well, really! this *is* a pleasure worth speaking of! I congratulate you, Lady Maristow, on the improvement of your looks,—if that could be.”

“And I,” replied Theresa, “may return the compliment, I suppose, by—”

“Now, my love,” said Mr. Clackworth to his wife, who looked silly and hung her head, “now, my dear love, there is no need to blush! she is so amiably sensitive, Lady Maristow, but we have just come over to enjoy ourselves a little upon this happy occasion. May I beg your address?”

“We leave Paris to-morrow for London. When did you come?”

“The day before yesterday,” replied the manager's lady, taking heart to speak: “you see, Lady Maristow, after my poor Bob Tyrell was taken from me, I was quite like a lost woman, and did not know what to do; and so you know—”

"I understand," replied Lady Maristow bowing good-mouredly, and thinking that the scene might now be ended—"I am afraid that in Paris we shall hardly meet again. Good-morning—Victor, to the Duchess Castellani's."

The carriages separated; but Theresa could hear an impetuous inquiry, wafted on the wind, which followed her, and ended with "address in London."

"No, no," said she to herself half-smiling; "I fear it cannot be; what would Mrs. Talbois say?"

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## PART IV.

### PARTING AND MEETING.

"We never care—secure again to meet."

*Crabbe.*

"How I wish that Mrs. Chester Younge was in town," said Theresa, with a sigh, one morning of her second London season, when she was sitting alone in her drawing-room. She had, by this time, run through the routine of a gay life;—she had tried Paris, London, Naples, and exhausted the peculiar pleasures of each; she had passed through the intoxicating atmosphere of universal flattery, and become accustomed to the state and glitter of the fashionable world. Her private purse was always liberally filled; her equipages among the handsomest in the Park; her house the favourite assembling place of the noble and the dissipated:—she was, in short, as renowned as the most fastidious or apathetic man would wish his wife to be; and yet was never so little contented with herself—so far from being happy as at that period.

She had long feared, but now she *felt* that she was becoming an object of indifference to her husband. Something of surprise and disappointment had early dawned upon her mind during the first few months of her married life. So clever and so well-informed as she had thought him! and how his understanding must certainly have retrograded! She was in a mistake—her mind, like one of the flowers which open late, did not come into full bloom at once, had gone forward with a speed far beyond the usual rate of development. She had been forming original opinions, and observing and concluding, whilst

remained where he had been, willing to repose idly upon the fruits of other people's labour. He had, it must be confessed, with an increase of fortune, contracted an indolence of mind, which might trench upon sensuality. But, as long as they were in motion, and he was amused by perpetual change of place, all went well. It was only upon her second return to London, that the splendour of Theresa's situation began to be dimmed by trials. Then it was that Sir Harry began to fall back into his old bachelor habits. His former set of acquaintances, remembering the snug cabinet dinners of old times, the moderate play which succeeded them—(they had by no means a turn for gaming—not they!)—the gay *petits soupers* at the house of some favourite actress or singer;—all which delights had flagged when their gayest and richest supporter had married,—quizzed him most unmercifully upon his re-appearance among them. Had it been a match by which he was to have added a few thousands a year to his income, or to give a nobler title than his own to his eldest son, it might have gone less hard with him; but to have taken an actress off the stage,—on her own terms, too, was by them ridiculed as the greenest of all green tricks; and the idea of his proving a good husband shouted down with choruses of laughter—as though such an animal had never been seen upon Earth since the days of the Mammoth. It may have been gathered how completely Sir Harry had been married by chance; it may be, therefore, guessed how much power was exercised over him by the railery of his old associates;—all such good fellows as they were! It was a very proper thing, said they, for a man who could afford it to have a wife at the head of his table;—*they* were all too poor to think of such a luxury! and it was very correct that the husband should give her her uncontrolled way—by taking his own. So they reasoned, and so he acted. Lady Maristow had her own apartments, carriages, servants, everything, in short, but his counsel, his society,—above all, his love: while Sir Harry insensibly slid back into his ancient ways;—the exquisite dinner of six—the hazard after the dessert—and, of late, an occasional supper, (such is the inconstancy of man!) at the house or his fair foe, Mademoiselle Chèvre (who maintained her reign by the strength of assurance) for all which good deeds he was rewarded by hearing his friends say, some six times in the week, “that they had never seen a man so little spoiled by marriage as Maristow.”

But it was not in Theresa's nature to take life so easily, or to be able to cast herself loose of a tie with such indifference as her lord had set her the example of. She was alone in the

world, save for him; and, with the dismay of such as have only one earthly hope, perceived that its support fell away from her day by day. She loved her husband with such an affection as a woman always cherishes in secret towards her first hero of romance;—she loved him as the friend who had cared for her unfortunate brother; as the benefactor who had raised her from the chances of an exposing life to the certainties of a brilliant lot; and though she bore with his neglect uncomplainingly was not prepared to relinquish her claims upon him without many a pang of acute distress. She knew, as some modern author pertinently says:—"that lost affection was never scolded back;" but she felt her sorrow to her very heart of hearts. It was the shadow that stood between her and the sun—the sword suspended over her head, by a single hair;—she knew that there was a point beyond which she *ought* not to endure; and dreaded, worse than death, the approach of the moment when some glaring infidelity would compel her to seek for protection elsewhere. And whose protection was she to seek? She had discovered that a life of fêtes and operas is not the life in which friends are made: her own tastes with respect to society were as far from being gratified as in the days when she had lived under Mr. Lambwood's roof. She had confined herself strictly to the circle of her husband's friends—a circle in which any thing beyond drawing-room wit and genius sufficient to produce *bouts rimés*, was rarely found, and where lion-hunting was denounced as vulgar—that no independent action of her own might widen the space between their own interests; "We may perhaps yet be very happy together," she would say to herself "and I will not lose one chance by filling the house with people whom Sir Harry would dislike."

Poor Theresa! her mind was withering under the baneful influence of the atmosphere of the gaudy and heartless life she was compelled to lead. She grew restless and hysterical when alone, and the spirit and poetry of her native character seemed departed, to return no more. She had been taught tact by her affection, and would conceal this change of her lively nature whenever chance threw her into Sir Harry's company;—these opportunities became very few and far between: and she was not allowed the blessing of children on whom she might have poured forth her affection, so carelessly neglected by her husband.

"How long is this aching dream to last?" said she to herself one morning, "and what is to be the waking?—If poor Reuber had been—but there is no use to repine;—Sir Harry must not find me in a sullen humour if he should come home to luncheon. How I wish that Mrs. Younge was in town!"

"No sooner said than done!" cried a fresh voice from under a veil; "your good Fairy has sent me at your need! Why, Theresa, what a start you gave!—though I entered unannounced, I did not descend from a chariot of clouds, nor even from a balloon; so you must condescend to accept of me fresh from such a matter-of-fact conveyance as a chaise and pair."

Lady Maristow's surprise was equal to her pleasure; and her greeting was warm, almost affectionate.

"Why, Theresa, how country-bred you are still! do you mean to shake my arm off? or are you doing some penance to which my appearance is to put an end, that you look as if you would eat me? You might have known how I have tormented the colonel for these six weeks past;—'My dear I can't afford,' said he. 'My love, I shall die if I don't get up to town this year,' said I, 'and you will have to pay for my tombstone.' 'My love, we can't go in style,' said he. 'My dear,' replied I—you know, Theresa,—it is always well to be moderate at *first*—'I shall only want my opera box, when I get there.' 'My dear, I have no money,' said he; 'you are so extravagant.' 'My love,' I replied, 'I will be economy itself, if you will indulge me this once,—and save, till the very rats and mice run about the house with tears in their eyes!' So I made him laugh, and when a man laughs, you know, a woman is sure to win. I sent him off the first thing this morning to engage a box. What's your number?"

"Mine?" replied Theresa, "I have no box this year."

"Unworthy woman!—and why?"

"Sir Harry is not particularly fond of music, and I do not like going alone."

"Unfashionable woman!—but he would enjoy the ballet, would't he?"

Theresa became deadly pale,—but said nothing.

"But now that I am come, you must go with me—O yes—to see Grassini in 'Il Ratto del Proserpina,' to night—you shall! and tell me every body in the house; don't say that you are engaged."

"Sir Harry said something about Lady Dorchester's ball."

"Well, but you can go the opera first;—do, dear Theresa; I have looked forward to this for the last six months,—if you will condescend to patronise two people so far behind the rest of the world as Chester and myself."

"Nay, that argument is irresistible—well then, I will—"

"You are a dear, kind creature, even in London. And now, to prove my economy, I must get you to introduce me to your

*modiste*. I don't wish to bring you to open shame by my Exeter millinery. Come, the carriage is below, and the drive will do you good,—for, not to flatter, you are looking rather thin and nervous. Did I not hear you say:—‘How I wish that Mrs. Younge was in town!’ and now that she is come, you must go out with her.”

There was no resisting Mrs. Younge's lively importunity. She loved and appreciated Lady Maristow, and had guessed her history from what she observed during a long autumn sojourn at Maris Priors, and from some rumours which had since reached her. Theresa spent the happiest morning in her company which she had passed that year.

The opera of ‘*Il Ratto*’ was, at that time, a great favourite;—the house was filled by a gay good-humoured audience, and the music went, as music sometimes seems to go, spontaneously well. Theresa's knowledge of persons was incessantly called upon by her friend; and, though, as often as she looked round her to answer—“Who is that fine looking old gentleman with white hair?” or, “do tell me the name of that handsome dark man,” she was tempted to sigh and wonder what had become of her truant husband, on the whole, she cast off her cares with tolerable success. The box was crowded with loungers who never failed to gather round Lady Maristow whenever she appeared in public; but she preserved a manner so high and indifferent towards all of them—O! how unlike the Theresa of former times!—that even the most insinuating or confident of the troop was constrained to depart for lack of encouragement, Mrs. Younge being plain, somewhat sarcastic looking, and, though perfectable presentable in her appearance, a person whom nobody knew.

“Really, Lady Maristow—for I dare not call you Theresa here,”—said she, “you queen it beautifully. If you are not quite tired, pray tell me who was that last sublime looking person who made his exit so suddenly, and with a great sigh?”

“That was the honourable Mr. Downe, not at all a favourite of mine, I assure you.”

“Down-hearted he looked; and I should not wonder if we read of his hanging himself among the dreadful accidents to-morrow morning—I hardly know how you will answer it to your conscience.”

“Why did not you, then, try your hand at consolation?”

“Who—I?—a nobody—your Ladyship's humble friend from the country! O dear! don't you see how all the men pass me over with a stare and a shrug? What time or opportunity have I? No, no—your London lovers know better than, when in-

vited by the rose, to stoop to pick the daisy, as Hayley says. What?—another?—old enough too,” added she aside.

The new intruder was greeted with some cordiality by Lady Maristow. He was a Mr. Lumley, a middle aged man, and very plain; but so sensible, so gentlemanly, and so *sound* in his politeness, that Theresa felt she could trust him, and preferred his society to that of any other among her male acquaintance.

“What is this new ballet, Mr. Lumley?”

“The old thing over again, I am told—‘Phillis et Amynte,’ I suppose Arcadian, with temples of no possible architecture, and young men and maidens that would be hooted out of the first farm-yard they entered to ask for a job. Excuse me, Lady Maristow, but you know that I am some years past the poetical age.”

“And are therefore resolved to disenchant as many people as you can; now I defy you; I have half a mind to stay the ballet, and enjoy it, and believe in it, in spite of your satirical description.”

“I thought you were going to Lady Dorchester’s ball.”

“Thank you for reminding me; yes, no I hardly know till I get home.”

“Can you find it in your heart to abandon me to my husband?” cried Mrs. Younge in a tone of mock reproach.

“I must go,” replied her friend, “and besides, from the time which they are keeping you in waiting, it seems doubtful whether they mean to give you a ballet at all.”

“O it is only one of Chèvre’s tricks, I dare say; this being her last night, she is more than usually tiresome. Only, see, Theresa, how impatient the *pittites* appear. Pray Heaven, that la bella capricciosa have not sprained her ankle, for the Colonel was only lured out to-night by an express promise, on my part, of her dancing a great deal. Can you hear what he says?”

He was the manager, who had advanced before the curtain and addressed the audience thus:—

“I am sorry, Ladies and Gentlemen,” said he, “to be compelled to announce to you that Mademoiselle Chèvre has quitted London a few hours ago, and is now nowhere to be found. I have taken every pains to trace her, in the hope of being able to induce her to appear before you, but without success. Madame Dorival has kindly consented to take her part, at an hour’s notice. I cannot express my feelings at being thus unworthily treated, but I hope you will receive with indulgence such a substitute as I am able to offer, and if you will point out any



further way in which I can gratify you, I shall be most happy to comply with your commands."

This speech availed nothing; the confusion in the pit increased in spite of the submissive bowings of the manager. Mrs. Younge's attention, however, was withdrawn from the wrath of the world beneath, by a strong pressure on her arm, and the words—"Come home with me, and say nothing," uttered in a voice whose meaning could not be misunderstood. She turned involuntarily round to look if the expression of her friend's countenance corresponded with that tone of misery, and was more startled by its proud and tranquil beauty than she would have been by the palest cheek or most agonized brow. At that moment her eyes and Mr. Lumley's met; he, too, was observing Theresa with the most painful interest. "Well, Lady Maristow," said she, forcing a gay voice, "as Lady Dorchester is in the question, we had better relinquish Madame Dorival; Chester, we are going home."

"Going home—and you miss the ballet, Sophia? What freak is this?"

"Ask no questions," whispered she, suddenly, but ere she could complete her sentence, a name was buzzed about in the pit, which rendered further explanation unnecessary.

"Are you ready?" said Theresa, "come then," and she took Colonel Younge's arm with a quiet deliberation which his wife trembled to see. She *must* have heard!

A group of young men arrested their progress through the lobby, who looked significantly upon each other as they passed.

"Going away so early, Lady Maristow?" said the sentimental Mr. Downe.

"Yes, as the Chèvre has gone, there is nothing worth waiting for," replied she coldly: "Good-night!"

They were followed down stairs by a murmur, half of pity, half of sarcasm.

"I shall ride round with Lady Maristow, and you may walk home, Chester. Nay, indeed I could not trouble your ladyship to set him down; let us not make any further delay. You are already late for the ball."

The two ladies drove homeward in silence: and in silence, Mrs. Younge followed her friend to her dressing-room. Her maid had arranged the toilette table, and lighted the candles, and was now waiting impatiently for the appearance of her mistress.

"So late as your ladyship is! We shall hardly have time to do anything. Will your ladyship please to wear your pink satin, or —"

"I shall wear nothing—I shall not want to dress to-night; you may go, Hey! you may go, I say—go—go! ——"

"Now," cried Theresa, bursting into a passion of tears, as soon as the amazed and inquisitive abigail had left the room: "*now* I may give way."

"Yes, yes! give way to your feelings! I wonder how you could control yourself so long!—We are quite alone!—lean upon me, and my dear friend: this may not be true after all!"

"It is true!" replied Theresa, in a tone of the bitterest anguish, I know it must be true! I have heard something of this kind long—but this is even worse—and I may have been doing wrong all this time! I should have spoken to Sir Harry: I should have entreated—but it is all too late now. God help me! for I cannot bear this! Promise me that you will not leave me all night, Sophia: you *must* stay with me; I have no one to look to but you."

"I will not leave you, so long as you wish me to remain with you. But can I do nothing? Is there no inquiry? ——"

"None! none! I will hear no more about it! I have nothing left but to suffer—to go without a warning—without a word—even so little as a message—I have not deserved this! What am I to do? What is to become of me?"

Mr. Younge endeavoured to comfort her, but in vain.

"Do not! do not! let me cry awhile!—you can do me no good!—no one can: nobody can tell what wretchedness of mind I have already endured! How I loved him and it is over!—I think I could even have borne it better with any one else!"

She arose from her friend's arms, and began to walk up and down the room hastily, venting her anguish in broken sentences.—

"Had I given him any provocation, such as I see daily given by almost every woman of my acquaintance!—Had I showed him that I felt his neglect, and been fretful when he *was* at home, there might—*might* have been some shadow of an excuse!—and his mother too,—she will say that I am low born, and that he did well to abandon me!"

As she spoke these words, she took the jewelled comb from her hair, and threw it down scornfully. Her long hair set free, fell down to her knees. Mrs. Younge gazed upon the striking figure before her, now instinct with eager grief,—with tears in her eyes and indignation at her heart. That Sir Harry could desert such a woman for that heartless and half-worn out coquette, was not a thing to be thought of without strong and generous resentment.

She left the room for an instant, that she might despatch a note to her husband, acquainting him with her intention of remaining with Lady Maristow all that night. The household was in a perfect uproar of surprise at the news of their master's flight with Mademoiselle Chèvre, which had, by this time, reached them. They were assembled in the hall, all talking at once.

"It is a shame," cried the housekeeper, "such a wife as my lady has made!—Not one of your good-for-nothing duchesses who keep an open house for all the rakes about town!"

"But, dear me," said another; "she must have known that he only left the Frenchwoman just to marry her."

"And that," added a third, "was because of his wager with Mr. Clifton. 'I told you how it would be, Thomas long ago.'"

"What will the old lady say?"

"They say," replied the second speaker, "that she is past caring for anything, and turning Methodist as hard as she can. I met Willis in Bond Street on Friday, and he looked as gay as a lark to have left his place. When she asked him why he would not stay, he told her that he wasn't engaged to say prayers three times a day, and wouldn't stand it for no wages."

"She'll be dying suddenly some of these days,—she was always apoplectic,—and leaving those canters all her money."

Sick at heart, Mrs. Younge returned to her friend; and was much touched by perceiving that Lady Maristow had already made some efforts to control her grief. She had washed the tears from her eyes and arranged her disordered hair; and had even drawn out her writing-table.

"Nay, Theresa, if any letters are to be written to-night, cannot you employ me?"

"I must write myself. I will write to Mrs. Talbois, and tell her what has happened, and throw myself upon her mercy. I will not stay here an unnecessary hour. I can go nowhere so properly as to her house, if she will receive me. Surely she will not have the heart to refuse!"

Mrs. Younge thought it best to leave her to follow her own plans, though she sighed to herself as she feared how ineffectual would be any appeal to that cold-hearted woman.

"Will it not be the best thing I can do?—and I will follow the letter by the next post, lest I receive a prohibition. What other step could I take? I have no one else to go to and to remain here, exposed to scandal and worse—I cannot think of it."

"Come home with us,—or there is Maris Priors."

"No, Sophia, no," replied her friend mournfully; "thank you with all my heart, for your kindness, but it would not do. I could not bear Maris Priors now—or indeed any part of the country. We have been over it together so often, it is scarcely a year and a half since he took me there!—It would kill me.—No,—I must go to Brandfield: it is a miserable alternative, I know, but I have no other, unless," and she laughed hysterically:—"I take to the stage again!"

"Dear Lady Maristow, do not speak so—it frightens me!"

"I am very wrong," said Theresa, "but forgive me—because I am so *very* wretched!—I scarcely know what I say or feel. I think my reason is leaving me. Would to God it would, if I might forget! But do not look so shocked: let me go and pray,—it will do me good—I *must* go and pray!"—and she broke away from her friend with such a hurried wildness of manner, that Mrs. Younge could not but remember that Reuben was Theresa's brother.

She was absent for about half an hour, and returned much calmer. "I am better now," said she, "I will bear this grievous trial as well as I can. Rest?—no!—I shall never rest again!—at least, let me write first; and then, perhaps, I will obey you and lie down."

She then sat down to her desk, and exercising a strong self-control, though her hand, when least unsteady, danced over the paper like a feather, and hot tears stood in her eyes, ready to fall, wrote a few brief lines to her mother-in-law, saying that she was about to seek her for countenance and shelter.

"Simple enough," said Mrs. Younge, "to have touched a heart of stone."

She then, with a yet more faltering hand traced the following words on a sheet of paper, to be given to her husband, in case—but what hope could she have that he would *ever* return?

"Dear Harry,

"I have thought it better to leave London, than to remain here alone. In case you should return, I hope you will find me under the protection of your mother. I am going to her, for I know not where else I should go. Should you wish it, I will join you immediately, or in any other way prove myself

"Your devoted

"THERESA."

\* \* \* \* \*

## PART IV.

## PARTING AND MEETING.

"We never care—secure again to meet."

*Crabbe.*

ABOUT ten miles from Bristol, and as many from Brandfield, is a large old-fashioned inn—so entirely used as a posting house, that it was not common for a traveller of the better class to pass the night there, its accommodations were so very forlorn and incomplete. It was towards the close of a stormy spring day, that Theresa reached the Oak and Greyhound, in the course of her melancholy journey towards the house of her mother-in-law. She had put her original intention into execution of not awaiting an answer to her letter. The inn stood at the farther end of a large court-yard; splashy from the incessant rain which had fallen during the last four and twenty hours, in the centre of this court-yard, stood, or rather tottered the scathed and leafless tree, underneath which a greyhound was buried, (the sign having its origin in the two.) There was none of the common appearance of bustle which gives cheerfulness to an inn. The doors and windows were closed: there were no busy people about, nor loungers waiting under the shadow of the projecting barn roof, till the shower should be over; and as the carriage drove up to the door, Theresa could not help remembering, in spite of her grief of heart, and the fever which was in her throbbing veins, all the ghastly old tales which she had been told in childhood, of lonely houses, to which unwary travellers had been trepanned, and from which they were never seen to issue more. Even Hay, her maid, who had a stout Scotch spirit of her own, professed great suspicion of the place, "every thing looked so dismal—she hoped that they would be able to get on."

"At least," said Theresa, whose heart began to fail her, now that she was so near her journey's end—"I must rest for an hour."

"An hour, your ladyship! and so dark as it is already!"

"Well then, perhaps I had better make up my mind to stay

all night. I am very unwell; and *cannot* go on, till I have

landlady of the Oak and Greyhound, considerably flustered by the arrival of so gay an equipage at such an unusual hour, conducted Lady Maristow into her best parlour—a large chamber, wainscoted round with black oak, and scantily furnished. A small patch of worn Brussels carpet was in the middle of the floor, the few spectral looking chairs seemed nailed to the wall, and the ghastly picture of an old man in a ruff stared down from the chimney-piece. The window of this room commanded a prospect of a flat country; there was a lurid light on the horizon, where the sun had disappeared—but the rest of the view was hidden in the gloom of the fast deepening twilight. Lady Maristow ordered a fire, and Hay—“with many a weary step and a groan,” succeeded in dragging a stiff old settee embroidered with dingy worsteds, towards the fire-place; she then threw her cloaks upon it “to make it a little comfortable,” and recommended her mistress, “to lie down and make the most of it, for it was impossible that she could think of remaining up all night.”

“Why impossible?” exclaimed the landlady, incensed by Lady Maristow’s disparaging remarks—“Warmer rooms and cleaner are not to be found in Somersetshire than in my house; it is no pleasure to lodge such dainty people.” Hay—“and see if it be so: I feel as if I could not ride a mile, if my life depended upon it:—and do you, my dear woman, never mind her. I dare say we shall be very comfortable here.”

“I,” said the landlady, “I loves to deal with principals. I’ll tell your ma’am, and find the worst fault you can. Take care but the door or the fire will smoke.” The two went out together, and Theresa was left alone.

The sombreness of everything around her, corresponded with her morbidness to her mood of mind, and her weariness of life, over which fever was beginning rapidly to usurp its place. She recurred, during those few moments of reverie, to her former trials of her life, with a dreariness of heart which did not comprehend the least of enjoyment of the past, or hope for the future. At that moment she could have been ready to die:—to escape from the sad phantoms which haunted her in throngs past her mind’s eye—to be relieved from that incessant irritability which endows every fibre of the frame with a separate pulse. She strove, however, to struggle with the power of her feelings, and reached out her hand to take a glass which lay on the table, stained with some late carouse. She stopped it, as though there were poison in its touch—it

was a Bath play-bill, three weeks old, announcing the return of Mr. Clackworth's company: and the *debut* of a young lady—a pupil of Mr. Clackworth's,—in the popular character of Juliet.

Meanwhile the storm increased: the *green* fire was in momentary danger of being extinguished by the wind, which sobbed in the chimney, and the rain which hissed upon the coals. It became a positive relief to her to listen to the sounds in the house without—to the arrival of a horseman or two, who galloped into the court yard, and to the stir caused by their entrance. At last Hay returned. Her mistress thought that she must have been absent at least an hour.

"Well ma'am! and how are you now?—Dear! dear! but this is dismal!—and the fire is almost out!—Well, really, the rooms up stairs *are* clean, and if I might advise, and your ladyship *will* stay here—the sooner you go to bed after you have had tea, the better—I declare there is a draught in every corner—and bless me, this wind! out goes the last red coal!—Mrs. Nutley—and no bell, I declare!—Mrs. Nutley!—we can't—it's impossible my lady can get tea here!"

Mrs. Nutley, who had been pacified by Hay's recommendation of the sleeping-room, appeared. "She was very sorry—they had but one other private room, and it had been just engaged."

"I *must* go to a fire," said Theresa, shivering so that she could hardly speak.

"Poor thing! and cold with such bright cheeks!" said the landlady—who had gathered enough of Lady Maristow's story to enlist her woman's sympathies in her behalf. "If your ladyship could condescend to the kitchen fire for a little while—I will see that a fire burns in your ladyship's bed-room, and turn all the servants out."

"O thank you! any where to be warm!" cried Theresa with the capricious impatience of fever. "Come, Hay, I must leave you."

"To think of your ladyship being demeaned to the kitchen—Well, heaven send us better times!" The officious landlady had gone before them, and cleared the kitchen of every one save a traveller who was drying his clothes, "and whom," she said, "some-how she could'n't make so free with."

"Never mind, I am sorry you have disturbed any one—I can do very well any where!" while Hay lifted up her hands and eyes to express profound admiration for her ladyship's obligingness, and Theresa was too thankful to enjoy the genial blaze of a large fire, to notice the solitary person for whose presence

Mrs. Nutley thought proper again to apologize, as she arranged a large cushioned elbow chair in the chimney corner.

This was a man in a riding suit of rusty black. Hay whispered to her mistress that she did not like his looks at all: but Theresa was not provoked to look up.

"Such long white hair, ma'am," continued the voluble woman, "and a large peaked nose!—and yet not so old looking either!—I dare say he is a bag-man,—and stares so!" Still Lady Maristow, full of her own thoughts, did not turn her head, till, in the course of an unconscious change of position, she too caught a view of the traveller.

He was certainly an interesting figure:—his features, though shrunk, were fine, his eyes intelligent, and his mouth expressive of benignity. Hay only reported true of his long white hair, and his fixed gaze,—those bright mild eyes could not stare—they were certainly riveted upon Theresa with a troubled and melancholy earnestness. She had cast off her bonnet, and the full blaze of the fire revealed her features distinctly.

"I'll ask him what he is," muttered Hay, "Ahem! pray, Sir, have you much business in these parts?—But what is Mrs. Nutley about? *you* don't come in here, Sir!" cried she, confronting a servant man in livery, dripping wet, who was making good his entrance.

"Why now," cried the landlady, following close behind, "I told you I would give the note to the lady myself—and here it is, Madam, Lady Maristow, I mean!"

"But I tell you," persisted the man, "I was to speak to Mr. Proudfoot immediately."

Theresa had seized the note—she recognised the hand-writing, but held it in her hand unopened—she durst not—

"Dear Sir," said Mrs. Nutley, turning to the stranger—"do come and satisfy this man—I cannot have servants coming in here—pray come, Mr. Proudfoot!"

"I am not Mr. Proudfoot."

"Nor his father," persisted Mrs. Nutley.

"No—here is some mistake: I have come here instead of Mr. Proudfoot, but my name is Grafton."

"Grafton!" cried Theresa, springing from her chair. "O stop a moment, Sir! stop for God's sake!—that was my father's name!—you may be a relation—"

"I am afraid my poor lady's light-headed," said Hay *sotto voce*, "relation, indeed!—and to that shabby old man!"

"Your father's name!" exclaimed the stranger, hardly less agitated than herself—"can it be possible?—I left a daughter twenty years ago—"



"Yes—yes! you did!—my name is Theresa!"

"And Mr. Lambwood—"

"Then you *are* my father!" cried she, perusing his face with an agony of eagerness. That mutual gaze was decisive: for the features of Maria Grafton had descended to her daughter too plainly to be mistaken for one moment. With a wild hysterical cry of ecstasy and amazement, Theresa threw herself into her father's arms—nor remembered how long he had been a stranger to her. It was worth all that William Grafton had endured, to own so fair a creature, as he folded in his embrace, for daughter!—

"But indeed, Sir," continued Mrs. Talbois' servant man, "I must see Mr. Proudfoot."

"He is gone into Wales for a week; and as he was sent for suddenly, and I happened to be in the house, his mother thought I might supply his place."

"Never such a thing!" replied the man, "my mistress declares that she won't sign her will, till he comes! I must get back to Brandfield as fast I can."

"Ay—ay—go your ways," cried Hay, "we want no witnesses here! Dear!—and this gentleman to be my lady's father!—and such a fine looking old gentleman too—I said so from the very first!"

While the father and daughter so strangely reunited were despatching the outlines of the history of their lives in broken questions and answers, it must be told what chance had conducted Mr. Grafton to that spot, and at that particular moment of time.

The rumour which Mrs. Chester Younge had heard in the mouths of Lady Maristow's servants, was, for the most part, true. Mrs. Talbois had, of late, become inclined towards a new set of religious opinions; and by a series of trifling circumstances, was imperceptibly approaching a closer fellowship with a certain dissenting community in Bristol,—Mr. Proudfoot, the clergyman of the flock (and, by a strange freak of coincidence, Theresa's old persecutor) having obtained a favourable hearing, and thenceforth a great ascendancy over her mind, already weakened by one or two slight attacks of palsy. She had even allowed herself to be persuaded to have her will drawn, bequeathing all her property to that community; but, from the very common indecision of age, and perhaps a little self-reproach, kept it by her unsigned—till the fresh provocation of the tidings of her son's departure and Theresa's letter, fixed her wavering resolution. She summoned her spiritual counsellor, and despatched a note, to interrupt the journey of

her daughter-in-law, which contained these few and bitter words :

“ Madam,

“ I am by no means surprised at the news of Sir Harry Maristow’s departure, as contained in your letter of the 24th ; but I can see no reason for relaxing my determination to do my duty, because my son has failed in his ; and must therefore decline the honour of receiving you at Brandfield, or of any further correspondence.

“ Your obedient humble servant,

“ AGATHA MARIS TALBOIS.”

But the same moment which deprived the deserted wife of the hope of her mother-in-law’s countenance, had also restored to her her only surviving parent. William Grafton, after a life of vicissitude and adventure, (which may perhaps be told on some future day)—and which had involved the silence of so many years, had been permitted, at last, to set his foot once again upon the shores of old England :—and in our Sea-port Town, where he had left his two infant children. He did not lose one moment in making inquiries :—he found the Lambwoods dead, the congregation to which they and he had belonged, scattered by such changes, as only befall the inhabitants of a commercial town ;—the Worralls had gone abroad on the occasion of their daughters’ marriages, and the only person who was likely to give him any information as to the fate of his own family, Thomas Proudfoot, was settled at Bristol. Thither he went :—but a fate seemed to stand in the way of his receiving immediate satisfaction. He found that the young man had gone on business to Wales. He resolved to await his return,—and in the interim, arrived the summons from Mrs. Talbois, in which Mrs. Proudfoot, mistaking it for a sudden call for spiritual help, requested her inmate’s assistance.

The result has been told : for to attempt to describe the delight of that evening—delight, on poor Theresa’s part, snatched from the midst of sorrow—the inquiries—the answers—the confidence which dawned upon her mind, as she found that her long lost father was so gentle and good ;—the pride of the parent, in discovering for his daughter so fair and affectionate a being—chequered with sympathy for her trials—and sadness when he was told the tale of Reuben’s fortunes—to record these, I say, would require a more skilful hand, and a more patient audience, than I could give, or may hope to meet with.

But the events of the last few days had been too mighty for

our heroine's excitable frame. In the course of the night, her fever had increased alarmingly; before the noon of the next day, her life was pronounced to be in danger:—and the first service which William Grafton was called upon to render to his daughter, was to attend at her bed-side for many weeks—in the course of which time he completely won the affections of Mrs. Hay, who declared “that he was the beautifullest nurse she ever saw, in spite of his boots, which were more like port-manteaus, than things made for Christians’ feet to wear. Such beautiful boots as her *own* master wore! she wondered where he was then!”

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## PART V.

### THE CHARMS OF PARIS.

“Good night!—and joy be with you all!”

As soon as Theresa recovered from her long and dangerous illness, she applied herself to the immediate consideration of her plans for the future. It was not a matter of much difficulty to arrange these, when the only step which she could take was to place herself under her father's protection. She accordingly reduced the establishments in London, and in Maris Priors, to the smallest possible scale, and, in the absence of any communication from her truant husband, decided upon accompanying her father down into her native county, in which he had resolved to spend the remainder of his days. When Mr. Grafton had gathered together his little property, which was swelled by one or two small legacies, bequeathed to him during his absence from England, he found that it amounted to a sum which enabled him to purchase a small cottage, about four miles to the southward of our sea-port town; and within a hundred yards walk of the river, which is there very broad. Reuben, whose recovery was now confirmed, was, with Dr. Barnes's approbation, brought thither; and the beginning of June found the three settled in their habitation.

Here then, our heroine seemed to begin life anew, for the third time. She kept up no communication with any one in the gay world, save her friend Mrs. Chester Younge, and ex-

cept the quarterly remittances from Sir Harry's Steward (which, to do master or man justice, were punctually forwarded to her,)—she had little, save her own memory, to remind her of the great and unlooked-for change from her late to her present situation. Whether or not Lady Maristow would apply for a separation by law from her faithless husband, was the subject of a week's wonder in the circles from which she had disappeared. There were also many contradictory reports as to the person whom the opera manager was to engage in the room of Mademoiselle Chèvre, for, as to her appearing again before a London audience, it was a thing quite out of the question:—and then, the whole tale was forgotten for some novelty; save, perhaps, when a solitary loungee looked up at the dusty windows of the deserted mansion in Arlington Street, and said to himself with a sigh:—"Ah, poor Lady Maristow! what a charming woman she was! and gave such delightful balls!"

The garden belonging to Mr. Grafton's cottage, was a very small patch of ground, overgrown with the commonest of flowering shrubs, and, close beyond it, was a field divided by a double row of trees, which had been probably intended as an avenue to some mansion never built, and now served as a beautiful frame to the ever-changing picture presented by the river and its opposite bank. Here it was that Theresa not unfrequently passed the greater part of the day alone: and though the town was so near to her retreat, that she could distinguish the tone of bell from bell, and count the clocks when they struck, she felt herself as much withdrawn from the world, as if she had been the tenant of some hermitage in a desert. She would lose herself in all manner of painful speculations and conjectures; she would revolve a thousand schemes, and yet always arrive at the same disheartening conclusion, that she had no hope save in patience.

Here, too, her father would sometimes venture to break in upon her musings, and talk to her of his past life. He would tell of the sufferings which he and his high-hearted wife had endured in foreign lands:—how they had been distressed and damped by their ignorance of their language:—and when that difficulty was fairly overcome, how, in the course of a war between two native princes, they had been carried up the country, and imprisoned for years in a hill-fort;—and how they had persuaded the idolaters within its ramparts to love them, if not to believe in their God:—and how, in the midst of their captivity, a secret and slow misgiving had possessed the mind of the *mother* who yearned for the children she had left—and she had sickened—and declined—and at last died:—and an old man, whose child

she had nursed tenderly till it died in her arms—was for many nights seen sitting in the moonlight, watching the grave in which she had been buried outside the fortification, and scaring thence the beasts of prey.

Here, too, her father would discourse with greater gravity, upon thoughts as well as things. At first, she shrunk from what she feared might be a repetition of Mr. Lambwood's dogmas, or Reuben's rhapsodies,—but she soon began to find such conversations interesting as well as edifying. Her father had learned in the course of his wanderings, the true value and meaning of the gift of charity—that grace so often professed, so seldom practised. He had been taught to *act* as one who believed that there are as many duties allotted to man, as there are different temptations, that the use of some may be to *think*, as well of others to *perform*;—that there may be those to whom it is appointed to do good in the world,—as well as those who are called upon to retire apart from it and pray;—he believed—but this is not a tale of creeds. And then his piety was not clothed in the plain prosaic language of calculation, but in the vivid eloquence of a heart overflowing with a loving and expanded faith: and as he told of dangers overcome, and temptations wrested with, and hopes held fast, his daughter was constrained to own that there were those whose bodily and mental trials must have far surpassed those which she found it so hard to endure.

Once, and once only had they spoken together of the circumstances of Theresa's married life. She had dreaded that her father should insist upon a final and formal separation from her husband, and had extenuated Sir Harry's faults, with all the earnestness of that love which never becomes weary of forgiving. But she was unspeakably relieved by the view which Mr. Grafton took of her duty. He was far from advising anything so decisive, when both were so young, and so much might happen. Theresa ought not to place herself in a situation in which a reconciliation would be impossible, so that he recommended patience to her; and she never loved him so well as at that moment.

She had one great comfort, in daily witnessing the amendment of her brother. Reuben, it was evident, could never be entirely restored to his former powers of mind; but he was now at peace, and rational, though not so strong as before, and even spoke of undertaking some regular situation, in which idea he was encouraged by his father and sister. He was as fond of gardening as ever; and was never so well pleased as when he could greet Theresa in the morning with the offer of some large

rose or rare carnation. The summer and autumn, however, passed away, without his having procured any occupation; and winter was rapidly approaching.

"I wish," said Theresa, to her father one day, "that Reuben was happily settled:—I feel an anxiety on his account, which I cannot describe."

"We must wait," replied he, "it is not easy to find any situation, which may suit him exactly; and I am willing to keep him under my own eye; and besides, this secret reading which he has taken to of late, seems to occupy him fully; I do not know that we should wish for more. Who can tell what effect the bewilderment and temptations of a town might have on his mind *now*?—Poor Reuben! he will never make his fortune;—but there will be enough for you both when I am gone!"

"But, father, I am afraid;—I have noticed, have you not observed it?—that, for the last few days, when he has looked on me, his face has grown sad, and he has turned away so suddenly; and he has hardly spoken to me all this week."

"Let us hope that it is only some passing cloud, my dear Theresa. We can never tell what is going on in such a mind as his. Do not, I entreat you, my dear child, allow yourself to give way to presentiment."

"Ah! when did it ever deceive me! but I am foolish, and it *shall* be only fancy;" and, with a full heart she turned away to walk alone.

Mr. Grafton watched her as her figure slowly lessened down the avenue, with a feeling of deep inward concern. "God help her, poor child!" said he, solemnly, "for I fear it is past the power of man! We must wait however."

\* \* \* \* \*

And now it is high time to pass over to Paris, to take a view of Sir Harry Maristow and his frail companion. The autumn had been spent by the unworthy pair at Vienna, and they were now returning to the French metropolis for the lady's winter engagements. Sir Harry was by no means comfortable in Paris. Mademoiselle Chèvre, who only maintained her ascendancy by the extreme of assurance, with an occasional and very sparing pretence of tenderness, was there surrounded by a tribe of admirers—new and old: and, discovering her value, was unceasing in her indirect demands and expectations. But such is the folly of man!

It was known that the simple Duke of —— (the same from whom Sir Harry had carried off Theresa in triumph) was meditating a descent upon the Chèvre, rumour said, like Jupiter, in a shower of gold: and Sir Harry was piqued into vowing to

foil his Grace in this, as well as in the previous affair. The Danae of this history took full advantage of this rivalry; and by perfect coolness of temper contrived to irritate the vanity of both the gentlemen to such a pass, (like Goldoni's *Locandiera*, receiving every gift, *per non disgustare il Signor Conte*, and committing herself to nothing,) that by-standers shrugged up their shoulders at the preposterous folly of these English Milords; and the tale of their extravagances was the subject of many a caricature and *calembourg*. Nay, wagers to a large amount were laid upon the issue of so ridiculous a business, which was found so entertaining, that the friends on either side spared no pains to foment the strife.

Of course, the splendid presents of jewellery, the purchase of the one cachemire shawl in all Paris, could not be accomplished without a tolerably liberal expenditure of money. Then the hotel which Sir Harry occupied was voted horribly small and *triste* by his *chère amie*. He took another without delay in the most fashionable *faubourg*; twice as large a mansion as he had any business to afford, but the Duke of ——— was in treaty for it,—so it was whispered,—and the whisper decided him. However, he began one fine morning to count the cost of all these luxuries, and to consider that it might be as well to fix some limit beyond which he would not be tempted. In the midst of his cogitations, appeared the Chèvre, dressed in her most syren smiles: she could not yet allow her victim to indulge this thoughtful mood, so laughed him out of it most unmercifully. It happened that on the same evening, he won a large sum at *faro*: it was a fatal winning,—for the means of replenishing his purse appeared so simple, that this success launched him at once into the midst of the ocean of gambling. He was singularly fortunate in play; and to complete his delight, won a handsome sum from his rival the Duke, so that the bewitching Zoe's attachment for him increased to such a touching height, that she was thrown into fits by the bare mention of the possibility of his being obliged to run over to London for a few days, on business of consequence. Accordingly, Sir Harry did not go.

He was sitting one morning, lounging over the ruins of a late breakfast,—the Chèvre having retired to her boudoir to settle with her milliner the dress of Cleopatra, which part she was to enact in a forthcoming ballet,—when a friend from England was announced; the last person whom he would have cared to meet, and yet whom he had no pretext for avoiding. It was none other than Mr. Lumley.

"Have you found me out, O mine enemy?" said Maristow,

trying to joke off his confusion, which showed a mind not quite at ease.

"Why, Maristow," replied his friend good-humouredly, but gravely, "there was no great difficulty in discovering you in Paris just now. I can assure you that the first thing I heard when I set foot on the pier at Dieppe, was of Milor Maristow's splendid hotel and equipages, and really,"—looking round him as he spoke:—"I find that report has for once been moderate, and that you are sumptuously lodged.

"Um—you see women will have these things. One must gild the cage, if one means to keep the bird."

"Some birds, though, are obliged to be content with wicker cages."

"More fools they!" replied his friend, upon whom the allusion was not lost, and who resolved to try what coolness would do:—"but come, Lumley, sit down—that's a good fellow—O, the devil! not upon that chair for the world! If Faufan is disturbed in his first sleep, I shall hear of nothing else for the next eight and forty hours.—What news from London?"

"I can tell you nothing, except what you must have heard twenty times before; did you know that Clifton was going to be married?"

"O—ay—a horribly stupid thing,—she as ugly as Satan; he, as poor as Job. Come now, Lumley, what are you so close about?—Have you nothing else to tell me?—nothing—nothing of my wife?"

"So," said his friend inwardly,—“she is not quite forgotten, it seems: there is nothing to be heard of Lady Maristow, save that she is living down in the country with her father.

"Old news, Tom," replied Sir Harry, yawning;—"I had a letter a mile long from the old gentleman, but I could'nt get through it."

"Then I suppose that it will be equally old news to tell you, that I think Lady Maristow the worst used woman of my acquaintance."

"What!" cried the other, starting up, "do you come to Paris to praise my wife before my face;—let me tell you, Sir,"—

"And do *you* come to Paris to defend your wife from being praised by other men?—Nay, don't fret, Maristow; you shall hear me out, as you have forced the subject upon me. I repeat it, that I consider your wife ill-used; and the more, that your present connexion has not even passion to excuse it;—nothing but the paltry ambition of wishing to *out-buy* the Duke of——."

"Lumley, my good fellow, you are talking most confounded stuff," replied Sir Harry, stretching himself on the sofa, and



resolved not to *show* that the admonition was of any consequence.

"You shall not yawn me out of doing my duty by you. I am your best friend, Harry; and have looked upon such matters as these too often, not to have some experience in them. Why man!—it is the talk of all Paris!"

"And what does all Paris say?"

"Why, people are betting upon the longest purse—for no one seems, for an instant, to suppose that anything else will go to the decision of the question. It was but last night that I stood behind two gentlemen at the Spanish Ambassador's who laid a wager that the Duke would entice your fair friend away, by the lure of a certain diamond *aigrette* which is in preparation."

"It is all a tale—a lie! I know her better;—but, hush! she is coming. You'll dine with me, Lumley, to-morrow—Monday—better on Monday, if you are not engaged;—but let me see—that's the first night of Cleopatra, is it not? Oh, well, we will dine early, and go all together. Good morning, if you are in a hurry—and never believe a tithe of what you hear."

"Now, in the name of absurdity," soliloquized Sir Harry, "what has brought that old fellow to Paris? I can't help liking him, though, for all his preaching. A diamond *aigrette* is to be the *coup-de-grace*, is it? Good angels help me only this one night, and that *aigrette* shall be in my hands to-morrow, as surely as my name is Maristow. So, my pretty Zoe,—why, you are not looking your sweetest this morning;—have Madame Germon and you quarrelled about Cleopatra's robe?"

"No;—but it is very provoking—I have not half diamonds enough to wear with it."

"Well but, Zoe, cannot you complete your suit, for once, with stage diamonds? you surely cannot want many."

"There," cried the sorceress, half playfully, half pettishly, "there is one of your *outré*, masculine notions!—stage diamonds!—as if I could wear anything but real! You forget, Sir, the person to whom you are speaking." And the lady walked to the window, and began to entertain herself with the destruction of a rose tree, which the day before had been pronounced the only thing worth living for.

"Why, Zoe, only see what you are doing! Do you take me for the Sultan of Golconda, that you talk of diamonds as indifferently as you seem disposed to treat that poor pretty rose bush? I wish I were, for both our sakes; but, as I am only a poor Baronet, would not pearls do?"

"There is another specimen of your strange English taste!

Pearls for a Queen ! They are fit enough for a sea-nymph, or a fairy ;—but, besides, pearls do not suit my complexion, and I cannot bear them, and *won't* wear them ;”—another pout, and another pull at the unfortunate rose tree.

“ Well, Zœe, if you set your heart upon it, we must see ;—but you will drive this bright morning, will you not ? ” and the Cleopatra allowed herself to be persuaded into a good humour, and to condescend to ride in that splendid equipage which was the envy of half Paris.

Monday came, and with it Lumley. The two had not again met since their first interview. At a first glance Lumley perceived that his friend was in no very pleasant state of mind. He had lost as heavily at play, on the two preceding evenings, as he had won enormously before ; and, as the Chèvre's temper was the barometer which showed the state of his purse, his house had been made uncomfortable, as well by her caprices and *vapeurs noirs*, as by his own reflections. He was beginning to be weary of her selfishness ; he had fathomed her emptiness ! and Lumley's words, though they had apparently produced no effect, had sunk into his heart in spite of himself. But for the present, he was piqued to go on.

A few young men, all fond of deep play, had been invited to meet the Englishman : they dined early, and sat but a few moments over their wine—for there was much to be done, and little time wherein to do it. Mademoiselle Chèvre had not honoured them with her presence ; she was already engaged in preparation for the triumphs of the evening, as she did not deign to dress at the theatre ; but she promised to look in upon the gentlemen, for a few moments, when her toilette was completed ; and to take away as many in her train as chose to go. Sir Harry had a dispensation to remain behind if he pleased, *and if the game was found particularly interesting*.

Lumley, pleaded a violent head-ache, declined joining the party ; and, as he was not rich, his excuse was readily received. He threw himself upon a sofa, at a short distance from the table, and observed, with the utmost interest, the proceedings of the group. These would have formed an admirable series of studies for a painter.

The stakes were nominally moderate—for the party, all adepts in refinement, had voted it vulgar and *gambling* to mention thousands of francs, etc. etc. They only played by accident, for the amusement of the moment ! And yet the experienced Englishman had fancied that he had noticed, during dinner, in *all* of them, that abstraction which proceeds from the repressed eagerness of expectation. They had all of them spoken

little, and in short sentences, and appeared to breathe more freely when they left the table. There was, in fact, an understanding among them which gave a false counter, and the sums for which they were to play were, in reality, enormous.

They sat down without ceremony, Maristow making no show of playing the host;—and, for the first half-hour, they had self-command enough to *pretend* not to show much attention to the game; took up the cards mechanically, and maintained a tolerably unconstrained conversation upon the nothings of the day. A brilliant chandelier above the table cast an intense light upon their countenances, which became a little more serious as the hour approached its termination. Fewer pleasantries were sported; and one, the youngest in company, became exceedingly pale;—"the saloon was so hot!"—whereupon, another rose very hastily and opened two of the windows. After this momentary interruption, the work was resumed, and the observer's presence forgotten.

Now came the period of scrupulous courtesy—the careful observance of titles and points of etiquette.

"If Monsieur le Baron please"—

"Favour me with the cards, Sir Harry"—

The players named their losses in a tone of counterfeited indifference; the Baron, with a heap of counters before him, protested, in the most *sans souci* manner possible,—“that his luck was really extraordinary—quite stupidly uninteresting!” Some one was thirsty, and Sir Harry called for wine: it was brought—strong old Burgundy; the young Chevalier Deschamps emptied a bottle at two draughts. They sat down to play in most emphatic silence;—for, from some few significant words and looks which had been exchanged, Lumley concluded that the stakes were increased.

I question whether any one of that infatuated company was more interested than their solitary spectator, though the sight was not a new one to him. He would have warned them, but he knew, by experience, that such caution only irritates, without producing any good effect; he longed, however, that some interruption might put an end to the game,—and, at his wish, in the full state of Cleopatra, in the full perfection of beauty, enhanced by a four hours' toilette, Mademoiselle Chèvre entered gracefully—the very personification of unconscious dignity. Not a head was turned to welcome her. She bowed, with a fascinating smile, to Lumley—for she had, that night, good humour to spare to every one, even to a total stranger,—and approached the table.

“How shamefully unpolite!” cried she coquettishly, laying

her perfectly moulded little hand upon Sir Harry's cards; "you accompany me to the opera, *mon ami*."

"Ah, Zoe!—in a moment—Chevalier, we wait for you," replied her friend, never turning his head, and, therefore, not perceiving that the high forehead of his Cleopatra was illuminated by a magnificent *aigrette* of diamonds, and that a cestus of brilliants confined her robe of silver tissue.

"No answer!" cried she archly, gliding round the table, and lingering, for a moment, behind the chair of the Chevalier,—  
"No gentlemen for the ballet—what a lamentable want of courtesy! Well then, I must go alone!" and she stole on tip-toe out of the room. Lumley was certain that he had seen her exchange a shrewd and meaning glance with the Baron, who continued to win with little reverse.

"Upon my honour, Mademoiselle Chèvre, I beg you ten thousand pardons," cried one of the party, a devoted esquire of dames, about half an hour after the lady had disappeared. Deschamps laughed at the Count's absence—that laugh was terrific. The game proceeded; towards the end of the third hour, the Count and the Chevalier started up abruptly, and declared that they must go, not to be too late for the last act of the ballet. As the young man left the room, he passed close to Lumley. For months afterwards, when he was alone, or at night, the fearful countenance of the Chevalier Deschamps started up before him. His light hair was streaming from his head in a thousand different ways; his features were as haggard and changed as though their owner had passed years in prison; his waistcoat was torn open, and, as he withdrew the hand which had been busy about his heart, the spell-bound Englishman perceived that the tips of his fingers were stained with blood! He staggered out into the antechamber—a beggar, and more than half a maniac.

The hours wore on; midnight had long ago been tolled by every clock in the city, and still that ghastly party pursued their sport with untiring vigour. One of the candles in the chandelier went out, another, bending in its sconce, dropped a stream of congealing wax on the head of the person who sat beneath it;—but they still played on. Sir Harry's valet came into the room with a countenance full of alarm, and, having deposited a note on his master's elbow, sped out again with the rapidity of lightning; but the *billet* laid unopened where it had been first placed. They played on. Meanwhile the crescent moon rose beautiful and pure above the roof of some neighbouring buildings, with one star at her side. The unnatural scene within, revealed by the dim light, showed in awful contrast

with her holy natural loveliness;—the same that was beholding so many a tranquil wood-scene at that moment, and was mirrored in the rippling waters of so many lakes;—the same upon which Lumley thought the deserted wife might be even then gazing, and breathing a prayer for her unfaithful husband. But the solemn and silent rebuke of Nature was unheeded. They still played on.

Another hour had passed by, and the moon had risen beyond the sight of the only one who had noticed her. By this time the antagonist players had begun to use short and angry words, and to provoke each other to risk yet higher stakes. At length, in consequence of some dispute, the game was broken up, and the host declared a loser to an enormous amount. He gave the requisite acknowledgments to his debtors with a forced coolness of manner,—attended them one by one, to the door of the antechamber, with deliberate politeness; and when the last had departed, and he thought himself alone, walked slowly to the open window, and, hiding his face in his hands, leaned out to catch the influence of the fresh night air. Now was the time, for Lumley, trusting to his friend's absorption of interest, to endeavour to steal out through the shadow which veiled half the chamber. He was afraid to leave Sir Harry, and yet was certain that his remaining could do no good.

But his step was heard;—his friend turned sharply round. "Who is there?" said he, "Why, Lumley, where ever have you sprung from? what has brought you hither at this time of night?—Are all in England well?—What is the matter?—Pshaw!—I forgot you dined with me: but my memory is not worth a farthing now!—Good night!—I am sorry I have detained you so long—let me light you out! all my fellows are gone to bed."

It was even so and the antechamber was in total darkness. Sir Harry bearing a light preceded his friend, talking incessantly. "What a sleep you must have had, Lumley!—Stay here all night?—No, I am very sorry, you see, I have not half furnished this huge place, and can't accommodate you—*are you afraid of anything?*—This way—I will let you out at the side door, into the street at once—take care, the steps are very steep: d—n all French staircases!—I must play porter for once in my life;" and he applied himself to unfasten the door, which was not a very easy task, still talking to himself—"Eighty thousand francs at one *coup*!—Plague upon this lock!—it is as stiff as—. There, it gives way—what a splendid night! and some one is taking advantage of it—sleeping here *à fresco*—

make way, friend—good night, Lumley—do you see the broken step?"

But as he held the lamp at arm's length to cast a light upon the place of which he had warned his friend, the blaze fell full upon the features of him who was displaced, and, as he rose, clung to the railings for support—it disclosed the striking and emaciated countenance of Reuben Grafton! His clothes were worn, or, as it seemed, *cut* to rags; his complexion scorched by the sun to a lurid brown—his long matted hair entirely covered his forehead. He looked up with a stare of hunger and vacancy mingled—and half blinded by the flare of the lamp, shaded his eyes with one long wasted hand: while Sir Harry Maristow gave back a step, and gasped out, "God in heaven! Reuben Grafton—what are you doing here?"

The poor fellow made some inarticulate attempt at a reply, but famine, fatigue, and exposure had done their work, and the sound of his own name, uttered in a strange land, overcame him entirely. He fell at Maristow's feet. "Take me in to-night, as you hope for mercy in another world!" cried he, "do not let me perish of cold and want of food. Ah!—I see more clearly—I have found you at last!—take me in—for Theresa Grafton's sake, do not let me perish here!—You have done her wrong enough already!"

Sir Harry was stung to the heart by this abject misery—and recalled at once to his better nature—"What dreadful chance has brought him here?"

"I will tell you," replied the poor wretch, weeping from very weakness, "but let me have a crust of bread and a drop of water before it is too late! I have not tasted food for the last four and twenty hours!"

"You shall have everything you want!—Here, Lumley—take the light! Gracious heaven! he is as light as a feather! he must be half starved!—There, throw your arm over my shoulder—and I will take you up into my room at once. Try and bear up, poor Reuben, you are in kind hands, and I will take care of you."

Sir Harry found no difficulty in lifting his feeble and helpless burthen up stairs,—the next thing to be done was to awaken some of the household. They were roused in fear and trembling, dreading some explosion of wrath on their master's part, because of Chevre's desertion,—a fact which was by this time known to them all, and were as assiduous in executing his commands as they had been afraid of his anger. Reuben was undressed, placed in a warm bath, and then laid in bed—a little warm soup was prepared and administered to him, with good

success. So soon as Lumley perceived that there was no imminent danger, and that food and rest was all that the wretched stranger required—he took his leave, wondering what all this strange kindness on Sir Harry's part could mean.

"But where is Zoe all this time? where is Mademoiselle Chèvre?" cried Sir Harry, suddenly recollecting himself—"Why is she not here to help?—Where is she, Charlot?—You attended her to the theatre?—Speak, fellow!—*you* have enough to eat—*you* have no need to shiver!—*you* attended her home, did you not?"

"No—if you please, Milord—the Duke—dere was a note—if you please, Milord,—left on the hazard table."

"Bring it here," cried Sir Harry impetuously. The lackey obeyed. His master tore it open—read it again and again—and burst into a loud and bitter fit of laughter.

"Most admirable!—why the caterpillar might have stayed with me, till she had eaten up the *last* green leaf! I may thank his Grace, that I have so much spared me: *As she finds I love her no longer*—O admirable! a reason for everything!—what is this? *Begs permission to keep the few trifles with which I have presented her, in memory of the happy days we have passed together*—by all means!—trifles does she call them! What a consummate idiot have I been! Eighty thousand francs too at one *coup*! But no matter—I am forgetting—so, my poor Reuben! are you better? give him a little more soup, Charlot, and see that he has one of my suits in the morning to put on, and you will sit by him all night. You have something to say, Reuben!—had you not better go to sleep?—well then, go, Charlot, I will ring when you may come back."

"*Ma foi*," said the valet, shrugging his shoulders, as he left the room, "my master is one original—he loses a fortune and his *chère amie*, and console himself wid dis beggarman."

"Now then, we are alone," said Sir Harry, gently, stooping his ear to catch Reuben's voice—"tell me, if it will relieve your mind—what can I do to serve you—do not be afraid!"

"Come home," said Reuben, raising himself in the bed, and speaking the tone of most earnest simplicity—"Come home before it is too late for you to be happy!—Why did you leave my sister?—Was she not beautiful enough to satisfy you—I have seen no one in this France to compare with her. Was she not affectionate? O yes! for I have seen her weep so often, and so pale as she has grown, and so thin!—and so sorrowful! She loves you like her life: she never did anything to displease you, I am sure! and you have done her this wrong without cause;—I saw her wasting away from week to week,

till I could endure no more, and I dreamed that I should come to Paris to seek you out—”

“And has this been literally all your errand?”

“Why else should I come?—We are happy at home, but for that:—my father is as kind as can be. But poor Theresa!—you should see her, sir, as I have seen her night and morning, walking so heavily, and, though she never complains, suffering so much. O come home to her, if you ever loved her!—these people here are never so good as she is! and do you think they love you as well?—No one loves you as well!—I wanted to see you face to face, to tell you this, for you may burn letters without reading, and messengers may forget messages, but you cannot choose but hear: and God has granted my prayer, and protected me through a strange land till I found you.”

“And did Theresa, did your father know?”

“I escaped in the middle of the night to Havre, by a French fishing boat. Know! did you think they could *send* me? and now, they are wretched to think what can have become of me, for I durst not write till I had seen your face. I have wandered about here these two days, begging as I best could; but I found no one who would help me, save some kind nuns; but you will come home, will you not?”

“We will talk of it to-morrow.”

“O now! this moment! you have not preserved my life to destroy Theresa’s—for I am sure that she will die, if you delay much longer. Promise me, as you hope yourself to die at peace: I entreat you,—I will never trouble you more. I shall go into some monastery, when I know that my work is done—come home to poor Theresa!—I will trouble no one any more.”

There are some moments of a man’s life which undo the work of years, and Sir Harry, whose evil was rather the consequence of satiety than passion, felt every word that the earnest young man spoke unlock the long sealed up fountain of his better nature, and set its streams free again. Chèvre’s desertion, and the Duke’s triumph—the losses of the night were all forgotten: and a sudden sense of the wilful wrong he had done, of the amends he would make, and of pity amounting to pain at the thoughts of Reuben’s wild and generous mission, and the sufferings which, in the course of it, he had endured, possessed his mind in place of his late and baser contemplations.

“I will; we will go back together, Reuben, if you will undertake to make my peace.”

“Peace with poor Theresa!—you are forgiven already!—but God bless you for your promise. No!—you shall not be burdened with me: I am rude and uncouth, and not always



myself. I have prayed to the Lord, and he has told me to enter into a monastery—in the world I shall never be at peace. You have made me happy now!—and when will you come home?"

"We will talk of it to-morrow; but now you must compose yourself, and take rest. Charlot shall sit beside you, and watch you, if you want anything. Sleep well, Reuben! and remember that you are in kind hands!"

Sir Harry stole softly out of the room, and retired to his own pillow in such a state of confusion of thought, as required the remaining hours of that sleepless night to disentangle it. The bubble had now burst completely—the hollowness of Chèvre completely detected, and the fugitive recalled to his home duties by such an appeal, as could not but touch the most unprincipled and heartless. That Reuben's had been a *prompter* mission, was not to be thought for a moment; and the love which had animated him to endure so much, and the simple picture which he had drawn of Theresa's sorrow, suddenly called all the better impulses of his nature into play again. He was not one, as we may have seen, to deliberate either over good or evil, and had only so long been kept stationary, by the stimulus supplied by rivalry. In the morning he addressed a cold note to the Duke of —, inclosing the *trifles*, which Mademoiselle Chèvre had requested permission to keep—and wishing his Grace joy on his purchase. The Duke was so contented with his dearly-bought toy—and as rumour said, a man of such a peaceable disposition, that he was not disposed to take umbrage at the sneer. Sir Harry then summoned Lumley, and remained closeted with him for the greater part of the day. That evening's mail conveyed a letter to England, a letter which was read by Reuben with tears of joy, and which half persuaded him to relinquish his monastery scheme, until at least, an answer should arrive.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was now a lovely winter morning; the anniversary of the day on which Theresa had visited Reuben in the dell,—when Lady Maristow might be seen as usual in her favourite walk, the avenue. But she was now moving briskly, with rapid and irregular steps, beneath the crisp branches which almost made music above her head, as the wind ran through them, every now and then shaking from every bough a shower of tiny crystals, or some last sere leaf. Whatever might be the cause of her animation, it had called a brightness to her eye, and sent a colour to her cheek, such as had not visited them for many a day—and it had wakened her voice from its long and melancholy silence, for she was singing, and her song was

a cheerful one. From the further end of the arcade, steps might have been heard approaching, had not Theresa been so much wrapped up in her own music; in another instant a pair of small arms were round her waist, and a voice, gay as a lark's and well nigh as musical, with mirth and sympathy in every tone, exclaimed—"Guess whom you have behind you!"

One scream of sudden and joyful surprise,—one slight momentary struggle, and she was shaking hands with her faithful and vivacious friend, Mrs. Chester Younge.

"This is indeed a surprise!—where—how—let me find breath, and words will follow."

"And while they are on the way, Theresa, I will talk. Have you got my letter? you inquire;—to be sure I have, and with all my heart and soul do I congratulate you!" and she wrung her friend's hand again, "though I shall be such a loser by this long absence from England."

"Ah! remember, Sophia, it is but a chance!"

"Why, love, man is but man,—and grass green—this is very damp, by the way; but I think that, this time, I dare bet something upon your lord's constancy. That good, dear old Lumley!—I could marry him myself!"

"What—and forget the Colonel?—nay then, it is high time to ask how he is—and tell me, love, how ever did you come hither?"

"All in good time, Theresa; but, my dear, dear friend! if you only knew how glad I am to see you looking so well and happy! You shall hear—the Colonel and myself have been long under a promise to spend Christmas week with a brother officer of his, somewhere in Yorkshire, who thought it fit to marry the other day—I am afraid we shall have a doleful visit—well, the evening your letter arrived, I could not rest—and he was as glad as I am, Theresa, so I plucked up a spirit and said to him,—'Chester, love,—I *must* go and see Lady Maristow before she goes abroad!'—this terrible tour!—*will* you ever come back?—'Impossible, my dear,' replied he, 'you forget our engagement with the Loscows!'—'It is only another day's journey, love,' replied I, 'and there is nothing to prevent our setting out a week earlier. I shall have two whole days to spend with her, and you can see the town, you know, you always had a wish—now there is no difficulty;' for I was afraid he was going to put on his calculating face; and when that is the case, you might just as well talk to a rock! 'Why,' said he, 'I should like to shake hands with Lady Maristow myself, but'—'O,' said I, 'Chester love, I hope you are not going to make *me* your butt!'—anything is good enough for

one's husband, you know, Theresa!—and so, with that he laughed,—and, to make a long story shorter, here we are, to stay till Friday.—Chester has walked Mr. Grafton off to show him the lions,—and we will have a long morning to ourselves. And now it is fairly your turn to talk:—tell me everything, that I may sympathize with you, chapter and verse.”

“I have little to tell you—my father, you know, is to take me to Paris.”

“The best—much the best! and though I shall be a lost woman without you at Maris Priors, your tour scheme is the wisest thing you could do. Idle tongues will have forgotten to talk about you, long before you have got to the top of the Great Pyramid—you go to Egypt, don't you?”

“Yes, and, I believe, to Russia,—but nothing is as yet decided; and Reuben has promised to return with his father, at my express request.”

“The best again—that dear Reuben!—don't cry, Theresa—let us be thankful with smiles—tears with the past—and hope for the future, is my motto.”

Theresa smiled through her tears.

“And all is to be forgotten!—right—right!—but O, Theresa, what a dolt I am!—and the most wonderful piece of news is growing old for want of telling!—Would you hear of a wedding—guess whose?”

“Nay, Sophia, I am a poor hand at a riddle,—but, to please you, Mr. Lumley's.”

“Out upon you!—have I not told you that I mean to keep him upon my staff, as an extra Colonel?”

“Well then, one of Lady Henbury's seven daughters?”

“What, one of the seven Princesses of Babylon, as I call them?—did you ever hear of a man hardy enough to undertake even a seventh of that confusion of tongues? No, no!—I must tell you, I see.—Pray, Theresa, when Mrs. Talbois marries, what relation will her husband be to you?”

Her friend stood still, petrified with wonder—“You must be joking, Sophia.”

“No, upon my honour, I am not—Mrs. Talbois is going to marry; but do try to guess *this* at least.”

“I cannot,” replied Theresa, “I am too much amazed;—but are you sure that it is not a scandal?”

“Now don't go and persuade me that such a golden piece of news is but pinchbeck after all—it is true:—I had it from the gentleman himself. What think you of Mr. Proudfoot?”

Theresa gasped with surprise—“Forgive me, Sophia, but this is too serious for a joke.”

"Nay, love, not at all. I can give you no particulars, but that it is to be. He takes her for her riches:—she takes him for his virtues. He does not know that the lady's jointure is to go from her whenever she marries again—and she forgets that when he discovers this, he will find her poorer by fifteen hundred charms a year than she is now."

"I am amazed—I can only say it again and again—and she so proud!—what will Sir Harry say?"

"What can he say?—but thank his good stars," (she had nearly said *cards*), "for such an addition to his income. As for the Reverend—by the way he was once a persecutor of yours, was he not?—there is the Honourable to the lady's name—and the credit of her conversion—and her venerable years—forgive me, if I must laugh—O, on the whole, I dare say it may answer very well."

"Well," replied Theresa, "I think that I am past the power of surprise, after this—and I feel so thankful, and happy, that I could almost say—past the fear of future trials."

"Ay—Theresa, you have been an actress in some curious scenes—and are now going to crown all, by setting out as a pilgrim."

"A pilgrim, love?"

"In search of domestic happiness—and you will find it, for you deserve it. Did you not feel those drops?—Let us go in."

### THE THREE FUNERALS.

How strangely is the use of the various incidents which occur to chequer the current of a town life overlooked! How idly do men waste the profit of warning or comfort which they might derive from contemplating the reverses which it presents to their view, in the hard labour of money-getting, or the dissipations of a life of frivolous gaiety. And yet the same One who invites men to meditation among the rich woods, the still meadows, and the glassy brooks of the country—He, who gives them, in his wondrous works of nature, a thousand intimations that there is a life above and beyond the present, exhibits to the busy inhabitants of a city, the workings of human passion, the extremes of splendour and misery, that, seeing the same, they may stand still for a moment in the midst of the whirl wherein they live, and reflect that though they may have their

goods laid up in store for many years,—that though they dwell fenced in by every luxury,—days of poverty may be at hand to counterbalance the abundance of the present; that only a few hours may intervene between their present prosperity and utter ruin; that only a few yards may separate them from some spectacle of distress,—and that they may be thus led *sometimes* to look a few paces forward, *sometimes* to think a little seriously, *sometimes* to remember that there is a *hereafter* as well as a *here*.

Yes, most impressive are the sermons preached by those contrasted events, which fall out so close to each other as almost to be comprehended within the scope of the same glance. How mild and beautiful a lesson has been taught to the feverish and dissipated creature, who returns home late, or rather early, from some scene of revelry, by the full soft sound and taste of the spring wind, as he leans from his window to cool his hot brow before he retires to bed! How has some squalid burial procession of grief and poverty arrested the attention of the careless wanderer as it crossed his path! Have patience, then, with me, while I chronicle one or two scenes which I have fallen upon in the course of my residence in our sea-port town, and which have impressed me strongly, by *contrast*.

What sad marplots of all festivity are those dull epochs of time, y'clept business hours! To have, for instance, to quit some agreeable circle to make out an invoice of manufactured goods, or to enter a consignment of salted hides!—and yet such woful and peremptory summonses are the inevitable lot of all who must live by commerce, and many a carpet knight, whom midnight has left sighing in some drawing-room, morning must find wrinkling his brows over his cash-book, and prices current. It was particularly provoking, however, on the occasion of a certain wedding, to be compelled to run away from the church door, because, forsooth, the New-Orleans was ready to go to sea, and circulars were to be copied, addressed to a score of firms of unmusical names in different American ports. It may be supposed that I set to work in no very amiable mood, and spoiled one or two choice specimens of the mercantile epistolary style, by wandering thoughts and vain imaginations. I know that I was compelled to scold myself severely before I could apply myself to my task seriously and satisfactorily.

And O, the relief, the positive ecstasy of feeling, when that task was completed!—when the last circular was signed, sealed, and directed. It was almost worth the drudgery of the by-gone hours to enjoy the luxury of putting papers into their places;

of locking drawers and doors, with the deliberate certainty of one whose day's work is done. It was a clear, cold frosty winter's afternoon,—every star was already out, and that fresh air breathing around, which is so invigorating to one who has been long chained at the desk, and hurries homeward wrapped up to the nose in some warm cloak,—so biting to the poor wretch whose clothes scantily cover his nakedness, and whose poverty compels him to seek in the streets for a pittance wherewith to procure food and a night's lodging.

On I went, in high spirits at the thoughts of rejoining a gay and young party of friends, when, in passing through an obscure street, a half-clad mendicant seemed to rise out of the earth close under my feet, and with a low and wailing voice entreated me to stop and listen to her.

I paused involuntarily;—the poor woman was the occupant of a wretched cellar. She said that she had lost her husband, and had scarcely tasted food for the last four and twenty hours; she had no fire, nor rags sufficient to keep her warm, nor anything to sell; but if I would please to come down, I should see for myself.

It was impossible not to be impatient of so dismal an interruption, and I answered for the first moment so abruptly, that, on the next, as a sort of atonement for my harshness, I resolved to follow her, and ascertain with my own eyes the truth of her story. The broken steps, descending side-wise from the street, were so narrow, that I do not think a stout person could ever have reached the entrance of that miserable habitation. The cellar was not worth a glazed window; a wooden shutter split with age, and half torn from its hinges, was intended to shut out daylight and cold at the same time. The door too, gave admittance to every blast; and a first glance into the interior of this wretched hole convinced me that it would have been impossible to have maintained any fire; for the street being in the lower part of the town, the cellar stories of its houses were subject to inundations from the sewers, whenever a shower of rain happened to fall; and the floods, which had only ceased on the preceding evening, had so deluged the clay floor, that if a few bricks had not been placed here and there as stepping-stones, it would have been impossible to tread a yard without sinking ankle-deep. There stood, in the furthest corner of this wretched place, a rough deal table, upon which was a candlestick, with a bit of lighted rush-candle in it; and beside it, the only other furniture, a crazy truckle bed, on which something was laid, wrapped in a coarse cloth.

"Good Heaven!" said I, "is there any one lying sick here?"

"He is dead, Sir," said the woman, in a hard tone, who told that grief for the departed was lost in the peremptory distress of hunger, cold, and nakedness; and stepping officiously towards the bed, she unpinned the towel, (most probably borrowed from some neighbour, for it was entire and clean) which covered the features of the deceased. I did not need this confirmation of the truth of her story, and the ghastliness of the object revealed left an impression upon my mind which haunted me for weeks. The unfortunate man had died of some disease which had discoloured his complexion to a livid yellowish hue as well as emaciated him most fearfully. His face, already like a skull, was turned towards me, and its large coarse features were yet distorted by the last struggle of life with death—the eyes had been only imperfectly closed, and their lids just started asunder into such a position, as it was impossible they could have retained in life for many seconds. The head was covered with rough hair, and the neck of the corpse, where bare and the whole appearance was so startling, so unlike the repose of death, and yet so far from the activity of life, that it required a strong effort to master the involuntary horror excited by so unpleasant a spectacle, and all possible commiseration for the indigent survivor to restrain me from rushing out of the hovel in disgust.

I can scarcely call to mind, if I would, the tale which was told me:—a history, often repeated, of the progressive steps by which, from the comforts of a respectable and quiet home, she had been degraded to the squalid misery of her present situation. The gaunt famine-bitten countenance of the speaker, her hollow voice, were unheeded by me, as I contemplated the awful object before me, and thought how fearfully different this end of life, from the outset of the two attached and prosperous ones, upon, as it seemed, a sea of smooth waters, which I had witnessed in the morning. When at last I had left the nestling place of poverty and disease, the form of the dead seemed to flit across my path through the long illuminated streets, in a thousand different attitudes. Within two hours she had exchanged the house of mourning for the house of merriment; and stood among the liveliest and loveliest, in the midst of every sight and sound which could tell of grace and pleasure:—and there too, the image of that loathsome object seemed to spring up from the floor among the dancers, and menace them with grotesque and fearful gestures.

The next contrast which I shall commemorate, was one more striking than the last, because far more in public view. That was one of those scenes of every-day misery which

screened from your sight by the obscurity of the actors therein. This was a spectacle upon which the eyes and the thoughts of half England were turned. I was present at the opening of that magnificent undertaking the Liverpool and Manchester railroad, a ceremony which had been so planned as to exceed in splendour and gaiety any former *fête* ever given in the provinces. Nothing could have increased the excitement of our townsfolk upon this occasion. A party of the nobility, such as had never before been collected in the neighbourhood, had arrived to share in the entertainments, and in the distance, was the Musical Festival, for which, it was hoped, that many of these distinguished guests would remain. Scientific men had thronged from the farthest corners of the kingdom to witness the triumph of art. There was to be a ball, which only the best of the best were to be permitted to attend;—a banquet for which the four quarters of the globe were to contribute their luxuries; and one like myself, not cynic enough to resist being swept along with the tide of popular feeling, who enjoys a crowd and a spectacle with almost childish glee, who is accused of attaching an undue importance to the amusements of this life, may be pardoned for thinking of so great and new a pleasure an unreasonable number of days before it arrived. There was something too beyond the mere gala in this case;—the delight of having surmounted the difficulties of an undertaking which wise ones had pronounced to be insurmountable; and to crown all, it fell upon a bright joyous Autumn day, when the earth having passed through the sickliness of spring, and the dullness of summer's heat, seemed particularly to invite enjoyment. I may venture to say that no one who was to bear any part in the show, either as a spectator, or an actor, will ever forget the triumph and the gladness of that morning.

The enthusiasm of the entire party on making trial of this new mode of conveyance; the sea of spectators which filled every square inch of ground from whence a view could be obtained for a long distance from the mouth of the small tunnel whence we emerged into the open air; the delicious and intoxicating sensation of seeming to fly instead of to travel, (which last word, to my thinking, might be almost always spelt with the *ai*, with great appropriateness) the animated countenances of every one concerned; the dresses of every hue under the sun; the order of the procession, and the speed with which it advanced, are to be found well described in the papers of the day, and accounts of the fearful termination of all this enchantment, of the dismay and agony of the conductors of the expedition, have been written by abler pens than mine, and are too



fresh in the memory of every one to need repetition. I shall only mention a few minor particulars which escaped notice in the general description of a calamity, so pregnant with amazement and misery.

At that fatal place, where the one to whom the undertaking was so largely indebted, was doomed to meet so hideous a death.—I had followed the popular example of alighting to seek out some friends in one of the earlier trains, with whom to say, “Is not this delightful?”—how much appalled was I by the universal expression of horror which sat upon every countenance! how intensely penetrated by a female voice from one of the carriages near me: “Will any gentleman have the goodness to inquire what has happened?”

I ran eagerly to the place where the speaker was sitting. It was Miss Fanny Kemble, and the same tones which a few evenings before had thrilled to my heart, in that tremendous soliloquy where Juliet, before she drinks the potion, lashes herself up almost into madness at the bare imagination of awaking in the midst of the corruption of the tomb, before the appointed hour of deliverance,—the same deep-toned and most expressive voice gave me the first notice of what had befallen our friend, our representative, and England’s statesman.

I shall pass over the period of indecision which succeeded before the completion of our journey was resolved upon;—the description of the lady, who, upon hearing that we were to proceed, brightened up with, “Well, Laura, we shall not lose our luncheon!”—the miserable arrival of our procession at Manchester, far more in the condition of revellers made captive in the midst of their glee, and marched slowly through an inquisitive surly mob to be judged and punished, than of a gay company assembled to commemorate the completion of a splendid national undertaking: I shall pass over the profuse and expensive collation despatched in the haste and stillness of a burial feast:—the weary return home, so slow and impeded, that night fell upon us, and the last half of the distance was passed over at a foot’s pace by torch-light:—I shall pass over the wretched suspense of the hours which intervened till we knew that there was no more hope,—and come at once to the morning when we all assembled in sadness to follow him to the grave, whom we had so lately accompanied in triumph to the place where he met his untimely death.

The mourners, forming a larger funeral train than had ever before assembled in our town, met in the splendid suite of rooms belonging to the Town Hall, in which the body was then deposited. Every one must have remarked the particularly desolate

appearance which public rooms, whose chief occupation is at night, present, when beheld by the truth-telling light of day; how tawdry the richest decorations appear,—how waste and dreary seem those large saloons, which when peopled and illuminated, recall to memory the splendour of the Arabian Nights! On the morning of which I speak, the windows were all of them partially closed, and the sight of the large company of gentlemen, all in deep mourning, who walked slowly to and fro, through that uncertain twilight, was a remarkable, to me, almost a fearful one. I remember particularly watching the procession descending the staircase, four abreast, with feelings such as are too strong to be awakened very often in the course of one short life. There had been no lying in state; none of the mummery, by which death, among the higher ranks, is, from a solemnity degraded into a spectacle; and the simplicity of form in which our tribute to the memory of the dead was paid, infinitely enhanced its sincerity and impressiveness. The entire ceremonial,—the procession through the streets, lined with a dense mass of grave and sympathising spectators,—could not but recall the last public occasion on which we had assembled; and when we listened to the burial service, performed in the midst of our picturesque cemetery, the boundaries whereof were crowded with a silent and reverential multitude, the hardest and most indifferent heart, must, I am sure, for the time, have been softened and awakened.

But little more than three weeks elapsed, and the same splendid rooms were brilliantly decorated and illuminated, being thrown open on the occasion of the Fancy Ball with which our Festival terminated,—and the same multitude, each member dressed in some gaudy or picturesque costume, swept up that wide staircase. It was impossible not to remember how and why we had last trod those steps!

I will mention yet another pair of contrasts, and then leave the subject,—it may be to stir up similar reminiscences in others. It is not very long since a splendid high mass was celebrated at our principal Catholic chapel for the benefit of an orphan school, or some other such charity. The powerful assistance of one of the first tenor singers of the day, (why should I not name Donzelli?) had been engaged, to give increased effect to the musical part of the service. The chapel was crowded to excess, for just then the singer was in the height of fashion amongst us,—and many had followed him through the entire range of characters which he performed when in our town;—beginning with Don Giovanni, thence to Otello, (with what delight could I devote pages to the remembrance of his singing and acting in that delicious Opera!)

Count Almaviva,—the lover in Agnese, and the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro*,—and now listened with delight while he sustained the principal tenor part of Mozart's twelfth Mass,—having flocked to the chapel to hear him with the same feelings as those which had drawn them to the theatre. But I question whether the coldest or most critical of his admirers were not moved to somewhat a loftier tone of emotion, than that of mere common excitement, when his manly voice, sweet and powerful without a tinge of coarseness, swelled through the building in a proud "Laudate," till the tide of sound almost seemed to demand outward vent; and they must have been dolefully insensible to music's noblest use, who did not feel their hearts up lifted by that glorious strain to adoration and thanksgiving. Then, too, the effect of the music was heightened by the devotion of the regular congregation,—and by the dignity of the officiating Priest, a man of comely presence and robust figure, who read and chaunted the offices of the day, with an earnestness and solemnity which could not fail to carry along with him even those of his hearers who did not understand the strange tongue in which he offered up his supplications—but who knew that he prayed and felt bound to him by so many good offices, so many vigils by their sick beds, so many an alma delicately and secretly administered, that they could enjoy the comfort of implicit faith in the efficacy of his prayers.

I attended that same chapel a few mornings afterwards, to witness the funeral of that same Priest who had died after a few hours' severe and sudden illness. How changed was the scene! I obtained a place close to the rails of the altar, which was surrounded by priests from all parts of the county, dressed in mourning robes. The service commenced at ten o'clock on a November morning; and a dun fog lingered in all the corners of the building, which, as before, was crowded to suffocation. So dim was the air, however, that, with the exception of the few who were within the sphere of the light cast by the wax candles which surrounded the coffin, no individual features or figures could be recognised. The solemn offices for the dead commenced with the seven penitential psalms, which were read in antiphony by the entire choir of priests in attendance. The effect of so many masculine voices pronouncing those moving words in "the kingly language of the glorious dead," was grand and majestic in that highest degree, and carried one back to the times of preceptories and chapters,—when their ancient religion was beloved and revered, and its corruptions, as yet undiscovered, ruled men by fascinating their senses no less than by awakening their hopes or alarming their fears.

After this came Mozart's immortal Requiem,—immortal, in spite of the doubts wherewith cavillers have attempted to dispute its authenticity. It was but indifferently performed; but there is a dignity, a power, a high-toned sadness belonging to its strains, which it is beyond the power even of mediocrity utterly to take away: and, assisted by the imposing scene beneath the orchestra—the presence of the patriarchal looking bishop of the district—and of the remains of the deceased, to which many a mind's eye must have pierced through the coffin, and seen the friend and the pastor reposing in the serene grandeur of death—the effect was most striking,—particularly to those like myself who could not forget how lately they had listened to the speech of the lips which were that day cold,—how lately they had bent to receive the benediction of the outspread hands which were to move no more,—how lately within those walls they had prayed with cheerful hearts, for peace for the living,—where they now implored, with deep humiliation of spirit, repose for the dead!

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## PARSON CLARE.

### PART I.

Fifty years ago, or thereabouts, there was not a happier fireside in our good town than Captain Oldacre's. On four evenings at least, of every week, did the same little company of persons assemble round it. There was the head of the house—a sensible, kind-hearted middle aged man, with a clear eye and a hearty voice, and that particular gait which distinguishes a sailor on land:—his wife, of whom little need be said, save that she was exactly, and in every respect, suited to her husband;—their only child, Anna,—a young girl who had scarcely reached the age of eighteen—the beauty of whose face lay in its exceeding innocence—who was as well instructed as she was gentle, and as ignorant of the follies and corruptions of a town, as if her father's house had stood in a field instead of a narrow dingy street;—and, lastly, a young clergyman, twenty-five years of age, whose seat was always at the maiden's side, and who owed his welcome as much to an expected *future* relationship, as to a distant one which had been already proved to

exist between Dean Herbert, his grandfather, and Mr. Symonds. Mrs. Oldacre's uncle, who had died at Quebec in the year 17—.

Wilson Herbert was, in those days, rather an extraordinary character for a town clergyman. He was retiring, grave, melancholy, and very proud; not one of the sycophantic sensual race, which, thank Heaven! is fast diminishing, who was to be found at every turtle feast and corporation dinner, overlooking if not sanctioning by the participation in, every licence of word or deed. He was not one who made his way in society among the fair and the romantic, by his black coat and blacker eyes, and those high-flown compliments which have such a peculiar charm and authority for the uninstructed: not one who preached speculative and inflated discourses, gathering round his pulpit all those dissipated people who love a crowd, and care not whether they partake of its delights in the concert-room or the chapel—and yet he was no less far from the right than the most latitudinarian or theatrical among them. He performed his duties seriously, sedulously, not with the deep and humbling sense of his being the minister of a pure and omniscient Deity, but in the strength of pride that no one should be able to lay any omission to his charge. He shrunk back from mixing in miscellaneous society, not because he was aware of the value of time, but because he was well-born and poor, and smarted severely under the humiliations to which such are necessarily subjected in a place where trade is the business of life, and wealth the standard of perfection. He gave alms, because the smallness of his stipend precluded the possibility of his saving any sum worth notice; and his eager expectation of preferment, did not arise, as the Oldacres interpreted it, from impatience for the time when he was to be married to the daughter, but was the first manifestation of that spirit which was to exercise so strange an influence over his future fortune and to make their story worth telling as a warning, no less than a tale of events.

There was not a happier fireside in our good town than Captain Oldacre's. The father of the family had passed his early youth at sea, and could tell of the East and West Indies, and the then comparatively unknown countries on either side of the Persian gulph. The mother, though she did not often open her lips as a story-teller, had her own casket of domestic histories and had no objection occasionally to talk over the tale of her own love trials. She had been the daughter of a country squire or large farmer in a neighbouring county, and had engaged herself to Captain Oldacre, when they were both very young, to the great discomfiture of his proud and ill-tempered

relations. These took every possible means to break off the match; when George was at sea, they made no scruples of intercepting all the letters upon which they could lay hands, and were perversely unwearied in blackening his honourable name by spreading tales of his inconsistency far and wide. They might have spared their labour. Monica Symonds said little, and believed less, whenever they brought her some new rumour, and maliciously affected to wonder that her betrothed wrote so sparingly to her, even when he finally decided upon leaving the sea, and establishing himself at Montreal. She *knew* herself to be incapable of change or falsehood, and believed as much of her lover;—and, heedless of the ridicule of relations on both sides, and the importunity of more than one rich and handsome suitor, who became the most pressing when, in honour, they ought to have withdrawn their claims,—lived on patiently, complaining little and hoping much. Better days came at last. George Oldacre was as faithful-hearted as his mistress, and, at length, weary of wondering why Monica noticed so few of his letters, entrusted a decisive epistle to the care of an old mess-mate of his own, who, about that time, entered into command of a ship which traded between our port and Montreal. It was on an autumn morning that Monica, on returning from a long and solitary walk, was summoned to speak to a “sea Captain from America who was setting waiting for her in the best parlour.”

The delight of that moment was worth all the days of evil report and probation which she had been compelled to pass through; but she was blessed with an eminently placid demeanour, and her scornful sisters could gather nothing of the contents of the precious document from her looks. She read it deliberately twice over, and then, turning to the sea-faring man, said quietly:—

“When shall you sail?”

“In less than a month,” was his answer.

“I will be ready to go with you.”

“What nonsense is it that you are saying?” jeered her listeners.

“George has sent for me,” replied she, in the same unmoved tone; “I knew he would; I am going to him to be married!”

From that moment, these were the only words upon her lips:

—“George has sent for me; I knew he would;”—and, in spite of the disparaging remarks which were levelled against her, as a person who would “catch at any chance,”—and in spite of all the prophecies of old relations, who pronounced her scheme to be little short of insane, she began to make in-

stant and active preparation for her voyage—a formidable undertaking, in those days, when comfort at sea was a thing unknown. She surmounted all its difficulties, however—joined her lover, and received the reward of her modest and unobtrusive constancy in the long series of years of a happy wedded life which succeeded. One use, however, she had drawn from her own experience,—she was peremptory in insisting that her daughter and Mr. Herbert should enter into no definitive engagement. “I will never,” she said, “if I can help it, allow a child of mine to be exposed to what I have suffered myself.”

In addition to the entertainment to be derived from this fund of family legends, Anne Oldacre possessed a remarkable well-toned voice, and was skilled in the accomplishment of reading aloud. She could also sing the grave and delicious music of Handel with the true taste and feeling which such music demands; so that the evenings were never too long, the hours never passed heavily. Then, sometimes, when it grew late, the party would creep round the fire, and indulge in the fascinating pastime of telling ghost-stories:—the old sailor, of threatening shadows that glided slowly across the water, before a storm came on:—the lady, of strange knockings and whispers heard in the dead of the night, in a certain wainscotted chamber of her father’s house;—the clergyman, not a few college stories of the appearances of friends standing, at the precise moment of their death, by the bed-sides of those whom they loved best when alive:—while Anna would sit, nestling closer to the speaker every moment, and listening, until every tinge of bloom faded out of her ripe red cheek. Those were perhaps the pleasantest evenings of all.

“I declare it is striking one!” said Mrs. Oldacre, on a certain Saturday morning, when they had sat unusually late, enjoying the luxury of fear; “I must positively turn you out, Herbert! I need not ask you to come in to-morrow evening, with your sermon unwritten: what is to be the text this time?”

“The deceitfulness of riches,” replied Herbert, rising and shaking hands with every one.

“Good night then, remember you dine here on Sunday as usual.”

Captain Oldacre’s house was situated in the upper part of our town, and commanded a tolerably extensive view, which has since been materially intercepted by piles of new building. While Herbert yet stood upon the door-step, tying his thick silk handkerchief about his throat, to ward off the biting night wind, his attention was arrested by the bright appearance of the sky, which, in its western quarter, was overspread with a vivid rosy

glow, radiating from a focus of brilliant light, which seemed every instant to tremble into greater intensity. The measured and sonorous toll of a great bell was also distinctly heard—that sound so unspeakably awful to those who suddenly start awake and hear its ominous sound through the stillness of night. At every instant some upper window was thrown up, and some anxious and scared looking head, crowned with its night-gear, protruded:—then the doors were heard to be unbarred, men, dressed in haste, came out to see the fire; and even here and there a lady, closely muffled up, whose curiosity had overcome her reluctance to leave her bed and mingle in a crowd. While Herbert yet stood upon the step, a magnificent column of flame arose swiftly and steadily above the roof of the building on fire, as from a cradle of blackened walls pierced with many windows, and ascended majestically into the lurid heaven; and whenever the wreaths of crimson smoke, in which it rolled off towards the south, were parted for a moment by the wind, one or two stars might be seen looking through—their cold and passionless light contrasting strangely with the awful and almost supernatural splendour which surrounded them.

That great fire was long remembered by the inhabitants of the town, and the memory thereof only effaced by that more enormous calamity of recent years, when two streets' length of huge warehouses, stored with every description of combustible goods, was consumed, and the burnt corn carried by the wind to the distance of four or five miles upon the London road. There was no resisting the excitement of the moment: Herbert was carried along with the stream, and presently approached the scene of destruction.

Round about it, the neighbouring streets presented a curious spectacle. Aged persons, who had been bed-ridden for years, had been dragged from their garrets, at the peril of their lives, and laid down in their beds, on the pavement, amidst such furniture and clothes as could be saved, heaped together in the most heterogeneous disorder; while the stronger inhabitants of the surrounding dwellings, rushed back into their blazing chambers to rescue yet more of their possessions: and the women and children who could not emulate their daring activity, kept watch over their property—and beheld in agony the progress of the victorious element; crying out aloud whenever some huge beam or fragment of wall crashed down, or some beautiful fierce jet of flame burst careering out of the windows, or through some fissure in the roof, as if to assert the triumph of destruction, and to mock the littleness of human strength.

Still nearer to the building was crowded an immense mass of spectators of every age and condition, gathered from every



quarter of the town,—whose curiosity was so powerful that they were with difficulty prevented by the firemen, and the company of soldiers, drawn out on the occasion, from perilling their lives by their violent struggles to press nearer to the blazing building. Above their heads the engines were spouting upwards their long and graceful columns of water, which were cast back again in hissing steam, by the heated walls of the neighbouring warehouses, for whose preservation they were directed,—and in the back ground of this fearful picture was seen the cupola of a small church, almost rocking beneath the weight of a mass of spectators, whose individual figures, nay, even features, were displayed with the most startling distinctness.

Herbert was tall and athletic, and, with a little patience, succeeded in piercing his way through the press, until he had approached so close to the cordon of military, that any sight, except of a phalanx of backs, was impossible. He chanced, however, to observe a retreating window almost close above his head, shielded from a crane hard by, by a stout cradle of iron bars. With a violent exertion of agility, he swung himself up to this, and grasping the stanchions in his hands, while his feet rested upon the window-sill, found himself in a most excellent position for observing the progress of the fire, which was now rioting in the fulness of its triumph, hissing and shooting out long wreathy tongues of light, as though greedy of fresh prey; and, what was scarcely less interesting, the countenances of the dense crowd of people beneath his feet, which were all turned upwards in the same direction, all animated by the same expression.

A more motley company cannot be imagined—there stood the vile and wretched inhabitants of the neighbouring court and alley, gigantic men, brutalized with intemperance and hard labour;—women, with stupid and bold countenances, long uncombed hair, and relaxed figures only half concealed;—and among these, people of a more respectable class, too much absorbed in observation, to shrink from such contact with the profligate and the unclean. There stood also among, or apart from the crowd, one or two of those singular figures whom one never sees abroad upon common occasions,—paralytic persons with large shaking heads, and stony eyes,—dwarfs, with irritable, disproportioned countenances; beings, who seem, at such a time, like decrepit evil spirits who have crawled forth from their dens, to gloat upon the mischief and confusion wrought by their more active compeers.

But the chief strangeness of such a spectacle arises from the one expression pervading every countenance, which gives a

this the semblance of a tormenting dream, wherein  
 ace is repeated a countless number of times; paves  
 beneath you,—gains the heaven above your heads,  
 you, with its odious multiplication from under every  
 ne way-side, from every dark corner of your chamber,  
 detestable and maddening annoyance of which you  
 scape but by waking.

re in particular, standing a little apart from any one  
 at Herbert's attention. He was a man who had ap-  
 passed the meridian of life, of a tall and stout frame,  
 which would have been handsome, had not a general  
 of expression, a cunning wink in his large eyes, and  
 sion of his thin lips destroyed the comeliness of his  
 and it was his dress, rather than his person, which  
 mark. This was mean, even to misery; his coat which  
 whilom black, was now threadbare, and patched until  
 original texture seemed remaining—his large riding-  
 of a still earlier date than this ancient garment,—  
 aich from extreme age, and long exposure to weather,  
 into an irregular form resembling that of a decaying  
 , was tied on with a rusty brown and white cotton  
 dkerchief;—and there was not a shred even of soiled  
 ble at either his throat or wrists. He stood leaning  
 ge ragged stick, watching the progress of the flames  
 culating eye; and while every other person was ex-  
 agonized, or terrified, he seemed to regard the scene of  
 him with apathy and indifference.

recognised him at once, having often heard the de-  
 f a singular character, resident in our town, who was  
 Miser Parson. He was a man of good family and  
 respectable attainments, whose passion for money  
 to a disease; and who, after he had already increased  
 tence inherited from his father, by the most rigid par-  
 owned the unremitting system of scraping, which he  
 to pursued, by marrying an old paralytic purblind  
 enty-five years his senior, merely for the sake of her  
 is.

ne had cried shame upon the match, and the victim  
 ice, who was as devoid of capacity as she was of per-  
 ceptions, too soon, alas! began to find that the crown  
 al was anything but a crown of roses. Her husband  
 neglecting her before the honey-moon had expired,—  
 bride the comforts which her years and infirmities  
 ;—forbade her the company of her friends, and, by  
 pon her fears, contrived most effectually to abridge her

control over her enormous fortune; and yet, before Mrs. Hyslop married him, she had always been stigmatized as penurious. She had been a fancier of birds;—almost her first act was to open the cages of her winged favourites, and set them free. She had been used to ride from one rendezvous of gossips to another in a decrepit gig drawn by an emaciated pony. This was disposed of immediately,—and the same fate befell every superfluity, and most of the necessities of life. He was at first deaf—before long, brutal, in answer to her remonstrances; and she would tremble when he crossed the floor, and cry in a tremulous and wiry voice, “O, Mr. Clare! Mr. Clare! I have paid dear for those bonny black eyes!”

Such was the man, whose miserable attire and apathetic look attracted Herbert's regard; Parson Clare had stood so long in the motionless attitude I have described, that he began to wonder when so singular looking an individual would stir,—and was only recalled from a train of extraneous speculations, by the circumstance of an immense wall falling in, smothering the flames, and darkening the light, with a tremendous sound, the echo of which reverberated again and again from the opposite houses. The crowd, terrified by this new disaster, gave a universal scream, and rushed wildly backwards; and not a few old and slow persons were thrown down, and trampled upon by the retreating mass of people, whose confusion was increased by this sudden diminution of the light.

Among those who fell was Parson Clare;—Herbert had seen him borne off his feet, and in another instant heard a sharp voice crying loudly for forbearance from the crowd, in whom the panic had subsided as rapidly as it had spread, and who, upon the cause of their alarm being explained, were again eager to press forward, and watch the progress of the conflagration. A strange feeling, totally impossible to be analysed, urged him to hasten to the assistance of the miser, whom he found laid at full-length on the foot pavement, a little without the reach of the feet of the mob, writhing with pain, and groaning most piteously. As Herbert made his way towards the spot, he caught such remarks as these—“Parson Clare!—hurt—is he?—Why, let him lie where he is;—he has met with nothing more than his deserts at last.”

“Ay,” observed one, who spoke in a cearse, but somewhat solemn voice,—“such is the end of ill-gotten and misused wealth:—but, however, he must not be left here to perish.”

“O no! no!” groaned out the poor wretch, who was grievously hurt;—“some one help me home!—I will make it worth any one's while—I will pay”——

"Give place to me," said Herbert, authoritatively ;—"I will see that you are conveyed home, Sir,—and do you, (to the crowd,) cease to hinder, if you cannot help."

"The gentleman's *fond*," sneered one.

"Nay,—what,—he is, may be, looking for a legacy," observed another.

"Or a wardrobe," echoed a depraved looking woman ;—"his boots alone are worth something ; they are only twenty years old !"

Heedless of all this and more such ribaldry, Herbert succeeded in raising Parson Clare out of the kennel into which he had slidden. When fairly placed upon his feet, the miser repeated his complaints. He was certainly very much hurt ; he believed that some of his ribs were broken. At all events his face was cruelly crushed.

"It is impossible that you can walk home," said Herbert, compassionately, "we must find some one who will go and call a coach."

"O my side !—a coach !" shrieked Parson Clare,—"and double fare too at this time of night !—a coach, indeed !—I can walk—I will !"—but, as he spoke, he reeled so unsteadily, towards Herbert, that the latter was compelled to support him ; which was a matter of some difficulty, as he cried out violently whenever he was touched.

"I have undertaken a troublesome charge, I fear," said the young clergyman to himself,—and then paused to consider what was next to be done. After some little consultation with the speaker who had denounced ill-gotten wealth, and who proved to be an itinerant Methodist preacher, Parson Clare was lifted into an elbow chair, borrowed from a neighbouring house, and carried upon it to the threshold of his own dwelling, which was fortunately situated in a neighbouring street.

This was a large dilapidated building, which had once been a mansion of some consequence, now fallen into disrepute, in consequence of the deterioration of the neighbourhood. The door had been painted ; but the colour was peeling off in large dry scales ; the knocker had been nailed down, but the nails had long ago rusted, and fallen out ;—and when Herbert applied to it, a hollow echo, from the interior of the neglected mansion, answered drearily. He knocked three times before any one appeared. At his fourth and loudest summons, a window in the third story above his head, creaked up, and a harsh vulgar voice cried out, "Who is there ?"

"We have brought home Mr. Clare, who is very much hurt."

"Wait a little—I will come down as soon as I have put something on."

"I will now leave you," said Herbert's assistant,—"I will not enter the doors of his house for the world.—Hark! there some one coming down stairs at last."

"Will you not stay, and help him to his room?—If there only women!"

"No, no," replied the other earnestly; "it is venturing far into the precincts of Satan. I must go now;" and he moved more quickly than he had ever moved before, Mr. Lovatt shuffling away, and the *staccato* trio of his stick and feet presently dropped into silence.

After a few minutes further delay, many bars were slowly undrawn, and chains unchained, and with a violent jerk, the door was thrown open, and the desolation of the interior dimly revealed. The wide entrance hall had been flagged with diamond-shaped slabs of pale marble—but years had passed since the floor had benefited by brush or bucket; the broken plaster walls were of a like dingy colour:—and the portress was more debased and wretched in her appearance, than might have been expected to belong, even to that squalid habitation. She was a short ill-made woman, with a broad, wild face; round dead black eyes, lips of almost a negro thickness; greasy dark hair falling in straight *pipes* rather than locks, upon a bare neck scantily mantled by a faded wrapping gown. Her feet were bare, and thrust into loose tattered shoes, brown for lack of blacking: and she stared out with an impudent, elvish look which had infinitely more of the witch than of the woman in her composition.

"So it is you!" cried she in the same surly voice: "I told you what would be the end of it!—Is he much hurt?—Come, come in, and make no more words about it," and dragging Fanny Clare rudely after her, who seemed too much stunned to resist, she shut the door,—not, however, as she had intended leaving Herbert on the outside.

"Bar it, if you *must* come in," continued the Hecate, "and hold him up on the other side. What, bleeding, Sir?—I tell you it was a crazy thing to go out; but you must see the difference forsooth! What will your wife say, I wonder?"

As she spoke, another feeble light was seen at the head of the first flight of stairs, and an old woman, nearly bent down with years and decrepitude, appeared crawling painfully downwards. She was so hideous — but it is impossible to dwell upon the description of one so aged and deformed. Her head shook incessantly, and one hand hung like a stone at her side.

had sense enough to understand, at one glance, what was, and slipped from step to step in her descent, with an enervatedness, which seemed incompatible with her feebleness, and then fairly confronted with her husband, laughed, and said in a hoarse voice, something between a croak and a chuckle: "Ay—Parson Clare! I told you that I should live to nail in your coffin yet!"

Herbert was, as it may be supposed, unspeakably shocked, seeing a squalid misery, so far beyond any previous experience. In the mean time, the miser had fainted. "Leave us," cried the younger woman brutally, "we are used and will soon bring him round."

"I will die in this miserable place," exclaimed Herbert.

"What is his own choosing?" replied the old woman, "isn't it wise to leave him, that we live as we do? Till I was married—daughter there!"

"Fie!" muttered Herbert to himself, "good angels forsake us!"

"I was married, I was always fond of having things done about me; I always had *one* sheet on my bed! Well, give over; he is coming about again, and now, when you choose to run and fetch a doctor, you are welcome to your trouble; it is a useless expense though, for he will die

As she spoke, Herbert was indeed thinking, that the presence of a medical man was eminently necessary; he therefore left the miser's house hastily, and in a few moments after, a knock was heard, long and loud, at the door of a surgeon's shop in a neighbouring street.

"Ob from the fire, hey?" said the man, thrusting out a head of hair, and a stout bare leg, at the opened front door, "I'll be dressed in a minute, and will accompany you;" and this dressing was no sooner said than done, for he very soon re-appeared clothed and shod. Upon being told the name of his patient, he shrugged his shoulders, put on a cautious look—Parson Clare was such a miser!—and was at length prevailed upon to set forth to administer relief, by undertaking to be answerable for his attendance, in case there should be any demur on the part of the invalid, or his

"Nonsense, Sir!—I fear, from what you say, that it is a bad case," said the callous Dr. Duckett, smirking at his own wit, "and was as inveterably profuse as it was weak; "and perhaps the old lady may open her purse strings, when he is dead; there will be a fortune for somebody or other!"

nothing much less, I should fancy, than a hundred thousand pounds. Good-night, Sir—Mr. Herbert did you say!—O, I know where you live, I will do myself the pleasure of looking in upon you to-morrow morning, and acquainting you, how your friend goes on.” As they parted, the drowsy watchman plodded past, calling the hour, “half past two o’clock!” and Herbert felt so weary, that he now took the shortest way homeward, though the still unabated glow of the heavens, and the distant shouts of the crowd, proclaimed that the fire was not yet overcome.

He threw himself upon his bed; not, however, to sleep, until his fancy, excited by the scenes he had left, acted them over again and again before his eyes, and intruded a thousand possibilities upon his notice: mere air-castles it is true, but potent enough to keep him awake for a long time, and to mingle with dreams, when fatigue proved too strong for imagination. “How unequally,” whispered the temptress, “is the lot of man cast!—one hundred thousand pounds!—there is magic in the very sound of the words, there is power, and rank, and luxury within their grasp! and he will die of his wounds!—What is that to thee? O, nothing, nothing at all!—only, *some one* must enjoy his hoards—*some one* must riot in the abundance of all his wealth!” “Shame on me! cried Herbert, starting awake,—while the bare remembrance of his dream brought the dew to his forehead, and made his frame tremble with ecstasy. “Shame on me! what have I to do with wealth?—am I not vowed to another, holier service! and shall I allow such base thoughts to overrun my mind?—such grovelling desires to tempt me?” “Yet,” again whispered Fancy, “the good things, the *great* things thou mightest achieve!—endow hospitals, befriend the neglected, acquire influence and authority to be used well—be beloved in life, lamented in death,”—and he fell asleep again, while the temptress was in the midst of her work, of seducing his soul from the truth, under a subtler mask than that of mere sensual indulgence. He dreamed that he was possessed of boundless wealth—he awoke the next morning, a poor curate, and took his bible in his hand, and spread his paper before him, to write a sermon on the deceitfulness of riches; while he took no thought of that most deceitful of all things within him,—the human heart!

He had scarcely concluded his discourse with a studied, yet simple petition, that the Omnipotent would rule the hearts of his people to moderation, and the smile of complacency, with which he beheld this eloquent period, had scarcely faded from his lips, when the train of his thoughts was interrupted by the

entrance of the surgeon. He came to announce the tidings of Parson Clare's death, "and," continued he, "his widow, I think, will not be long in following him. They are going to hold an inquest upon the miser's carcass."

"My friend," said Herbert firmly, "you speak too brutally of the dead."

"All I can say," continued Mr. Duckett, abashed for the moment, "is that you will have to attend."

"Certainly," said Herbert, rising, and closing his desk, "I will go now; I may perhaps be able to give some comfort to the widow."

"Comfort! ha! ha! he!—I beg pardon for laughing, Sir, but she, with a hundred thousand pounds at her own disposal! and he used to beat her like a dog!—Comfort!"

"Begone, Sir! there is your fee!" cried Herbert sternly, cutting short the son of Galen, with his haughtiest frown, and the tender of a guinea. Mr. Duckett ventured no further pleasantry, and sneaked out of the house as fast as he could. Herbert went out also—to the house of mourning.

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## PART II.

Now, to avail ourselves of the privilege by which story-tellers compass time, as the Prince in the Eastern tale over-passed space upon his enchanted carpet,—we will suppose "nine months are gone over," and look in again on Captain Oldacre's fireside. In this second view, only three were to be seen gathered round the hearth—the care-worn anxious father and mother, and, placed between them, the shadow, it surely could not be the actual person, of their beloved daughter. Yet it was the same, whom we saw so short a time ago such a different creature. Her figure was worn down to a melancholy degree of thinness; her rich hair hung about her face in masses, as if it were too heavy for her head; from her large languid eyes, bent upon the fire in the listlessness of vain speculation, a tear fell ever and anon on her clasped wasted hands; a large shawl was thrown over her shoulders,—and the furred slippers upon her feet, (though the month was July)—and the screen before the door, and the noiseless steps of all who came in and went out—were sufficient to tell the tale how sadly the spring had been spent.



The three sat in silence for some time ; at last, Captain Oldacre having left the room, Anna disengaged her hand from her mother's, and drawing it feebly over her brow, said, in a low voice,—“ I think, mother, that this time, I shall hardly die.”

“ Thank God that you can say so !” replied that excellent woman ; “ you are much better to-day, my love ; a week ago, you know, you could not sit up : in another fortnight we hope that you will be strong enough to bear removal. I did not tell you that your father has heard from Bath this very morning,—and he will go over, as soon as he is easy to leave you, and take possession of our new house.”

“ Kind, dear father and mother !” exclaimed Anna with energy, “ and you are breaking up your happy home here to indulge my caprice. How wrong it is of me ! how impatient ! I am sure I ought to have borne to stay here. Hark ! hark !” and she pointed with her finger eagerly, “ there is a step in the street ! let no one come in here—*no* one, mother !”

As she spoke, a knock was heard at the hall door ; Mrs. Oldacre rose hastily, and left the room, shutting the door of the parlour carefully :—but Anna's ear caught the tread of a well-known foot in the passage, and the sound of a voice—and her heart beat as though there was a fountain within it. The visitor was ushered into a room on the opposite side of the lobby ; but so strong was her fancy, that she imagined that even through the thickness of two walls she could distinguish the tones which had been dearer to her than any other earthly sound. Were they pleading for forgiveness ? she thought she *could* forgive, though perhaps *not at first*. She then folded her hands upon her breast, and, in that moment of suspense—of all others the most excruciating to a woman,—because she can confide her anguish to no one—prayed silently and fervently for strength to bear whatever burden it might please Heaven to lay upon her.

Meanwhile her faithless lover had followed Mrs. Oldacre into the dining-room, with the flushed face and uneasy gait of one already teased by an evil conscience—and proud as he was, he was afraid to meet the mild eye of Anna's mother. He changed his chair twice ;—waited to hear whether she had anything to say, having prepared an elaborate justification of his fickleness ; and when she persisted in maintaining a reserved silence, was, at last, compelled to stammer out “ That the weather was much warmer than it had been.”

Mrs. Oldacre assented ;—there was another pause.

“ I hope, Madam,” he began again, “ that it will have a favourable effect upon Miss Oldacre's health ;—she is better, I am very glad to hear.”

"She is,"—replied the mother, and a third long pause ensued, during which Mrs. Oldacre perused her visitor's face thoroughly, with her sedate and truthful eye. "May I beg," she said, at last, "may I beg for the communication which you said you wished to make to me. I have not much time to spare, and shall be glad to be set at liberty again, as soon as is convenient."

"I—I—wish to say?—Why—Madam, so intimate as we have been—I think it strange—on such friendly terms as we have been—"

"And are to be no more,"—interposed his listener, gravely.

"That is, madam—I mean—I wish, that is—to justify myself to you;—I am aware that you consider that I—that you—and yet if you will do me the justice to remember—in short, Madam, I am sorry you should think I have used you ill—and if you will allow me to explain:—"

"*Who* has told you that we consider you to have used us ill?" said she, with dignity; "we have made complaints to no one—we have asked redress from no one. If your own conscience accuse you, Mr. Herbert, to your own conscience you must justify yourself; for my own part, I can only say, that, if this be all your errand, your presence here is as fruitless as it is unwelcome!"

"I am glad," replied he, endeavouring to recover his self-possession, "that you confess you have no cause of complaint."

"Why then are you here, Sir?"

Herbert's cheek crimsoned deeply, as he ventured to mutter something about "a visit of friendship."

"Fie upon you! fie upon you!" cried Mrs. Oldacre, "this is a miserable subterfuge which I should not have expected to hear—even from *you*! I thought that my opinion of your conduct towards us should never pass my lips;—but this inconceivable behaviour of yours compels me to speak. Listen to me, Sir:—for the last three years you have been received within these walls upon the footing of an intimate friend. In the course of that time you used all your best address to gain the affections of my daughter. Many who are situated as I am would hesitate to confess that such — as you have proved yourself to be,—*could* ever have gained them; but I would not disguise the truth, no, not if I could silence all the folly which I know has been, and will be talked about this story. Well, Sir, and what has been the end of our intercourse?—without any cause, without even the pretence of an affront, you are known to be on the point of marriage with another. *What* she is, speaks for itself,—and I think, for I will be no more dainty

with your feelings than I have been with my own, that your motives are so obvious that even *you* cannot pretend to plead any other inducement than that of her immense wealth. Hear me out, and reply, if you have the front to do it! You are about to marry for money;—you have committed as deliberate an act of falsehood, as if you had broken an oath sworn upon a bible,—and yet this does not content you! You must even come hither, in the hope of wringing from those whom you have sought to injure, an approval of your mercenary and unhand-some conduct. You are about to sell your honour for money—you will meet with your reward,—and I am sorry for you—I pity you with all my soul, for the abasement of spirit which you will be compelled to undergo—for the wretchedness of the lot which you have stepped out of your way to *force* upon yourself. You wish me to confess that we have no claim upon you.—Pacify your anxiety;—we have never advanced any—we never shall; we are willing to leave you in your own hands. Ay—and if you see a tear upon my cheek, as I am a living woman, it is for what is to befall you, and not for what you have done to me or mine!”

She paused, exhausted by this sudden burst of feeling; and, fixing her eyes full upon the confused and astonished man, gathered herself up to hear his reply. But the truth of her reproach had stricken too deep to leave him in any condition for explanation or evasion:—with a convulsive movement of his hand, he clutched up his hat from the floor, and made his way out of the house—how, he did not know.

And thus was a proud, strong, learned man put to shame by a gentle and untutored woman! He felt every word she uttered to the inmost corner of his heart; yet he suffered with the desperate determination of one whose mind is made up, and who is prepared to abide by the consequences of his conduct. He knew what the world would say; he heard what his own conscience did say; but for all this, his heart was hardened to complete its unholy purpose.

It would be needless to retrace the steps by which he gained influence over the mind of Mrs. Clare—the course of reasoning by which he had persuaded himself to make an offer of marriage to her daughter—the Hecate of the miser's house: yet weak as the parson's widow was, she was not utterly devoid of maternal feeling and forecast, for the happiness of her child. She knew that she was doing prudently in giving her son-in-law the control over the greater part of his wife's property; she knew that to gain respectable protection for one so squalid, so debased by circumstances as her daughter, was next to a mira-

cle,—and reconciled herself to the exorbitant terms of the bargain on Herbert's part; as for love, he had common shame enough to refrain from pretending to it, even for one moment.

Unnatural as such a connection may seem to those who will not put trust in a tale, unless every minutest link of the long chain of incident is displayed for their inspection,—it is only one among a thousand similar instances of mercenary marriages. How many a beautiful and delicate girl has willingly gone up to the altar with some superannuated debauchee! how many a gay gallant young fellow has thankfully leapt into the arms of age and ugliness—and all for money! And let none fancy himself superior to the temptation, until he have proved its force—for unless that force were tenfold mightier than even imagination represents it to be, we should not be so often pained and disappointed by seeing the most gifted and the most high-minded yielding to its influence with so little show of a struggle. Thus it was that it fell out that Wilson Herbert married Jane Hyslop.

No sooner was the probability of this marriage an ascertained fact, than the tongues of half our townsfolk were unloosed in amusement, in sarcasm, and in disapprobation. Herbert thought that he had prepared himself for the vehemence of this popular outcry; moreover he had cheated himself into imagining that the creature whom milliners had dizenied out for the wedding day, into an appearance at least *passable*, might be tutored into becoming a respectable common-place member of society, amenable to the authority of her lord and master—and that it would not be impossible to counterbalance the influence of years of neglect and degradation by a season of schooling.

To school accordingly the bride was sent; and, for twelve months, was compelled to endure such courses of discipline and *feminizing* as were considered likely to conduce to her improvement. The event proved the sagacity of the measure. Even during that short period of constraint, strange rumours of her *eccentricities* transpired. She was not one of those passive personages, conscious of their own deficiencies, whom you may persuade or terrify into whatever you please, for the time being. She was vain, vulgar and violent; incapable of being stirred to the task of amending herself by either shame or emulation. Many even went so far as to say that, during the course of that time, she had shown glimpses of more disgraceful propensities than the love of tawdry finery, or the distaste to everything polished and refined. It remained for future days to develop these more completely.

While Mrs. Herbert was occupied in completing the educa-

tion which only began with her married life, her mother paid the debt of nature, and the Oldacres took up their residence in Bath; it was to Herbert, (he had resigned his curacy) therefore, less irksome than it might have been to begin his career in our town, as a rich man. His wife was brought home to her splendid mansion, clad in the most expensive mourning for her dear parent, and it was thought proper that she should be secluded from the world for the space of six months. Before the end of the time prescribed for the indulgence of sorrow had decently expired, her impatience of the seclusion of grief had become so ungovernable, that she insisted upon taking her place in society as a rich woman, if not as a beauty.

A lady, who has five thousand a year to spend, need never spend it alone; and Herbert's house was presently crowded with company;—the more the merrier, in his wife's opinion, who had never been taught the difference between gentle and simple, and who openly professed suspicion and dislike of "stiff, proud, proper people." All this her husband was compelled to endure, though totally at variance with his tastes and inclinations—for the slightest contradiction excited her to such immoderate displays of wrath, as made her an object of surprise and derision to her own servants. He hoped, too, that the constant collision of society might give her some practice of manner, purify her talk of its boisterous exclamations, and teach her a little composure of demeanour. He was laughed at unsparingly by the voluble and vulgar guests who filled his house, and emptied his cellar;—he was not slow in perceiving this, and it destroyed the little toleration with which he had ever regarded the individual whom he had chosen as his partner for life—for better and worse.

A year went by—and Mrs. Herbert, in spite of her having become a mother, seemed in the progress of deterioration, rather than improvement. She had so much of the savage in her composition, that she soon began to find the luxuries of her situation, at first pleasant from their novelty, before long, become irksome;—and the customs of polite society, trammels in the escaping from which was pleasure and triumph. Her fear of her husband, too, decreased daily; he had, before his marriage, planned a thousand plans for exalting his own importance, while hers was to be cast into shade, and was dismayed to discover himself compelled to relinquish all his own favourite schemes in order that he might maintain a fair appearance in the eye of the world. As for the mere possession of wealth, when the novelty of its delight had been exhausted, it was surprising how little energy to use or to enjoy it seemed to

be left to him. Day by day he became more and more frigid, more and more willing to retire from the public stare and sneer—and she, more and more careless of his approbation or blame. As for the world, (and Mrs. Herbert's comprehended only the frivolous, the malicious, and the unprincipled,) it presently began to find out how matters stood; and the length of time which elapsed, before Herbert's eyes were opened, can only be accounted for by his having bought a magnificent estate in a neighbouring county, the improvement of which, at all events, furnished occupation for his mind; moreover, his attention was engrossed by some private affairs of a delicate and interesting nature, of which we shall hear more presently.

Scandal had, indeed, been long busy with the names of both husband and wife, before her rumours reached the ear of the former. When, at last, he became aware that he was despised as an easy indifferent man, who kept no rule in his household,—that his wife was in the habit of openly boasting how well she could manage him:—when he became aware that not a few tales of the most odious description were in circulation, his awakening came with the violence as well as the suddenness of a clap of thunder. He was at Mile Park, when the “kind friend,” whom every calumniated person is sure to possess on such an occasion, made the labour of riding half a score of miles out of his way, to open Herbert's eyes to his own unhappiness. But the listener was well practised in the science of self-command, received the unwelcome tidings with polite and listless incredulity, thanked his guest coolly for the trouble which he had taken, yawned, and ordered his own carriage. His lean, curious informant rode away much amazed at his apathy, little thinking what a storm he was leaving behind him,—to rage all the fiercer in proportion as its expression had been at first suppressed.

There was a very large party that night at one of those houses to which it was a loss of distinction to be admitted,—a house where dubious characters were harboured, till they were past doubt, and many encouraged as wits, who would have been voted coarse in more select circles; where, under pretence of escaping from formality, much undisguised levity was perpetrated; and if one or two guests of a better class were chanced to be found, the same were never to be seen a second time. In the corner of a drawing-room, noisy past all endurance, and crowded to suffocation, was a whist table, at which four gentlemen were seated; and behind it, wedged in a small recess, a sofa filled by two ladies of extraordinary amplitude, who sat with their feet comfortably stretched out upon the same ottoman,

and were enjoying the luxury of a little choice scandal. strain of their conversation crossed the current of the card-ers' talk much in this wise :

"Bless me! Miss Kewin!—but you amaze me!—*Tha* yonder in red crape, with the untidy back and the fly-curls?"

"Yes—that is Mrs. Herbert—did you never see her be I say no more than the truth;—I thought it was no sec anybody but her husband."

"I wish, Sir," said one of the whist-players, a bald-h man, with a purple nose, addressing his partner:—"I Sir, you would try to be a *leetle* attentive to your game lose two tricks by your trumping my queen.—It is you Mr. Bigg."

"Why, if that be true, Miss Kewin!—there is some for her taking—ahem!—it's a horrible thing to let past lips—taking a glass too much now and then."

"O, if that were all, Mrs. Barrymore!—true!—I k is true!—he was to have been married to the girl, you k

"Well! yes, I know—and deserted her most shamefu

"These men are all alike, Ma'am," resumed the spins "and upon this, the Oldacres went to live at Bath,—ar know it came out that they died poor;—in short, the po was obliged to apply for a situation as a governess.—S plied to a friend of mine at Leicester, a Mrs. Hawkes, a ing woman, Ma'am, who wrote to me to inquire if she v spectable or not."

"And did she engage her?"

"Ma'am, you shall hear:—Mr. Herbert upon this e in;—wrote her the most affectionate letter in the world, ing a bank-bill for five hundred pounds."

"Goodness, Miss Kewin!—five hundred pounds! Clare knew what she was about when she was leaving l much of her fortune."

There was again a murmuring at the card-table;—"A misdeal!" said he of the purple nose;—"Upon my hono this is too bad; you should think of your partner;—if not mind for yourself."

"If you please, we will play no more," replied the r stranger, rising coolly, and tossing down his cards, with which prevented the other three gentlemen from remark rdeness of his behaviour. They left the corner in sear more zealous substitute;—and Herbert re-seating himse in a condition to be more distinctly benefited by the eot ion behind him than before,

hundred pounds!" repeated the incredulous widow, "I don't know how to believe such a sum."

"I got it from first rate authority, Ma'am. I heard Mrs. Herbert herself—she knew of it."

"How of it!—and he her own husband too?—dear me, what's the meaning of this?"

"Nothing!—not at all, Ma'am;—nothing in Mrs. Herbert's money, you know,—money, will carry anything off."

"What's the meaning of this?—why?"

"I can say, Mrs. Baskinmore," replied the bilious spinning her head mysteriously;—"all I can say, Ma'am, is that *poor* people are put in prison for stealing a loaf of bread out of a shop-window:—but if *rich* ladies have anything on them which does not happen to be their own property, it's a *mistake*, you know, and the more that's paid, the more that's said about it."

"What?" cried the widow, rising a hair's breadth from her seat, "drawing up her eye-brows to the elevation proper to amazement and horror."

"I insinuated nothing—nothing at all; it was—blessed if you notice that gentleman in the black coat?—did he not frown he cast upon me?—Mr. Herbert is at Mile End—can it be any of *her* relations?—I must go and ask Mrs. Herbert what relations she has—a—only see—there she is leaning upon the arm of that Major Godbold. I declare to you!—the man in the black coat!—he must be *somebody*, and in such a hurry!"

"Did you ever see?" spitefully whispered the other lady:—"she can hardly stand upright!—Well! well! it's a fine thing—but conduct for me, Miss Kewin!"

"As to the appearance of Mr. Herbert, a short explanation will suffice. He had returned home, with scandal ringing in his ears, and suspicion busy at his heart,—and found his wife dead. "Gone," as her maid said, "to a party at Mrs. Alderson's."

"That as a single man, he had scrupulously refrained from

As a married man he had rarely appeared in his wife's society—he was mostly unknown, and never inquired for. The thought of this suggested to him the plan which he adopted. He showed his wife, and availing himself of the stupidity of his lattered servant man, had been announced as Mr. Hardcastle had been well received; for a new male face was always welcome at Mrs. Alderson's, and she did not stop to remember that he had been introduced to the gentleman. His purpose was not to shine, but to observe—what a hateful condition to



be reduced to!—nothing better than that of a spy. His curiosity was gratified with a vengeance. The first figure that met his eye, was that of his wife, foolishly dressed in the extreme of inelegant fashion, and as conspicuous for her demeanour, as she was for her attire:—an object of remark from her rolling moist eye, her burnt-red cheek, her parched lip, and her thick and confused speech: and then, for the first time, did he taste the full bitterness of that cup which he had been so eager to fill for himself. Then did he remember, with frightful distinctness, the countenance of Mrs. Oldacre at their last interview, and her words, “I am sorry for you.” Then, for the first time, did he feel the first value of the fair right-hearted being whom he had so meanly deserted, and whose letter, returning his own with its enclosed bank-bill, was, even then, in his pocket-book—that letter merely a few words of acknowledgment, and “that she could not think of being indebted to strangers for what it was in the power of her own exertions to procure for her.” And he had given her up for ever,—he had placed himself in the situation of the despised husband of a profligate wife, and all for a few paltry thousands of pounds!

But the man who could bear to make such a sacrifice, could steel himself to abide its consequences. To leave the party, would be (should he chance to be recognised) to admit his misery publicly, and would make the retribution wherewith he intended to visit his guilty wife, appear an act of pique rather than justice. He compelled himself therefore to sit down to cards. During the course of the few first deals, he had learned the startling unwelcome truth that his offer of assistance to Anna Oldacre had been detected, robbed of its fair and honest meaning, as a penitent's attempt to make amends for past misconduct; and construed into an offence against his wife, which justified her in taking any revenge she might please. He had also gathered that her cunning was equal to her folly, that she had, in some way or other, possessed herself of a secret, which it would be easy for her to wield to his injury and her own justification. The truth was, that she had espied her husband putting the bill into the letter, and out of idle curiosity had taken it from the hall table on which it was deposited previous to being sent to the post—opened it,—and made her maid read it over to her; so that in consequence of his own unaccountable want of caution, the story of “Mr. Herbert's mistress” was presently in the mouth of every servant in the house;—not, it may be supposed, to proceed no farther.

The most insatiable lover of gold would think an enormous treasure not cheaply purchased by a few hours of such agony

rt endured on that memorable night. Good name—comfort—all gone,—and self-reproach alone left. He with all the bitterness of remorse and despair of his in-ther—the child of such a mother—what might be her were to die? Hour after hour did he sit waiting for return, and still she came not. Carriage after car-ried,—and hers was not of the number. A dreadful hope crossed his mind, that she might never return. was he reduced when he had to stoop to the comfort roved crime or death!

the sound of wheels was heard :—not, as before, to into deep silence. The chariot stopped.—The draw-where Herbert had been sitting, was in darkness, the aving burned their last. He ran out to the top of the d leaned over to listen. The lamp in the hall too, was ring, so that he could see without being seen. He s wife's coarse voice, and that of a gentleman. He short and thick, and clenched a small cane between s so violently, that the print of his fingers was seen mboo next morning. There was some bidding of good-und the door closed upon the cavalier. While Herbert esolute whether he should follow or not,—and how he ehave to his wife, she had snatched a candle from the the footman, and was beginning to ascend the polished rease. Her head was confused,—she had scarcely he first landing-place, when her foot caught in the train wn,—and uttering a loud cry, she fell backwards,—her inst the sharp corner of a step. Her husband heard and the outcry of the assembled servants who pro-her to be killed. He stepped noiselessly back to his mber, with his heart beating high,—and his cheek and warm as if the season had been summer. And this an who had been, or been thought to be, a conscientious of the gospel!

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### PART III.

must mount the enchanted carpet again, this time, to flight over a space of eighteen years instead of half as onths. During that period, the shrubs which had been o the plantations of Mile Park had become flourishing  
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trees:—and its ambitious master's daughter, whom we left an infant, had grown up into an elegant and intelligent girl;—grave, it is true,—for she felt that she had passed her life under a cloud, though she knew not by what that cloud was formed—and as humble and unpretending, as her father was haughty and reserved. She was beloved by every one who knew her,—and it was only by her friends' scrupulous abstinence from referring to that one point, that she had learned that there was some fact about her youth, which was to be concealed. Her father would have removed her from a place so pregnant with hateful remembrances, had not a clause in Mrs. Clare's will compelled him to spend annually a certain sum in his native town:—and, in addition to this, his alarmingly delicate health made travelling dangerous as well as irksome to him.

Eighteen years had changed—I might almost say, created anew the victim of his ambition. So much, indeed, was Anna Oldacre altered, that her nearest and dearest friends might have passed her in the street, and accosted her in society again and again, without recognising in the small prim figure, whose motions seemed regulated by machinery, the lovely laughing girl of former years. Eighteen years of the ungrateful labour of education, as it was in those days, had effaced every trait of beauty from her face:—her mind, too, formerly so fresh and imaginative, had been narrowed to the requisitions of her calling, and once compressed by a tremendous effort, had never expanded again. Her feelings, which she had compelled herself to smother, were somewhat reduced in intensity;—her temper had lost something of its old sweetness,—her devotion something of its fervour. She was now anxious about trifles,—curious in her dress,—not to make herself appear younger than she was in reality,—but to preserve it scrupulously neat and exact in all its apportionments: she talked fluently in a low voice, and with a formal accent; she piqued herself upon observing the minutiae of politeness,—and knowing when to come forward, and when to retire into the shade. Her colour had left her cheek,—silver threads had stolen among her rich hair. She *might* remember the past,—but no one ever heard her mention it;—and from her bearing and the uniformity of her spirits, she might be judged to be as happy a woman, as she was respected in the families to which her services had been given. The last lady, indeed, whose daughters she had educated, had settled an annuity upon her, sufficient to cover her small wishes for the remainder of her days.

It was about this time, that an old friend, her only correspondent remaining to her in her native town, pressed her to pay

visit. They met;—Anna could not but be vividly impressed, and forcibly carried back into the past, by finding Mrs. Pritchard as gay as she was handsome, and almost as young in appearance, as she had been, when they last parted; and her face was shocked past the power of concealment, on recognising the cheerful beauty of their old days of intimacy, in the red-cautious woman, whom she now embraced,—and at least she could revert to old times, and the old sorrows, which she had told so sad a tale upon her youth and beauty. There was no danger of this, however. Anna was curious to see the changes and improvements which her native town had undergone, but never once happened to speak of her former residence there, or her former trials. She betrayed no sensibility upon hearing Herbert's name mentioned in the course of conversation, nor when some person accidentally pointed out to her, as being one of the most accomplished girls in our

Nay more,—her friend owned a cottage on the borders of Mile Park—and Anna was found as willing to walk there, by any other lane or field of all the country round about. Mrs. Pritchard did not know what to make of this; she had intended bringing about something like the conclusion of a romance, stating, wherein the two lovers should make friends; but the apathy of Anna's proved a total bar to her carrying her mental purposes into execution.

One bright afternoon, when the ladies were sitting together in the drawing-room, which overlooked part of the grounds in Mile Park,—the unusual sight of an open carriage, containing two ladies and a gentleman, with a couple of outriders behind, was seen glancing among the huge trees in the park, and approaching the deserted mansion. "There is Miss Herbert, I perceive her by her long neck!" exclaimed Mrs. Pritchard eagerly.

"And who is the gentleman beside her?"

"Mr. Thomas Dulwich," replied the other provoked at the excess of her inquiry; "the young gentleman, to whom she is engaged to be married immediately. I hope it may turn out well."

"Ah—yes," returned Anna abstractedly, "this netting silk is finer than tow."

"Upon my word!" said Mrs. Pritchard to herself indignantly—"I verily think she must be made of stone; netting silk—indeed!—I wonder. . . ."

Now, it must be told, that Mile Park had for many years been shut up, and only inhabited by a steward and his wife, and that its distance from the town had been assigned as the

reason for its desertion. Phœbe had been very little there, and would by no means have been allowed to approach her father's house thus unceremoniously, if he had known of it; but Lady Dulwich had come down into——shire on purpose to be introduced to her daughter-in-law elect, and it had been thought proper to amuse her ladyship with excursions. Their little party had, accordingly, been spending a week in Wales, and were now upon their way homewards—they had made a deviation of a few miles from the public road, to examine an old church, and this had led them past Mr. Herbert's park wall. When they reached an old gate, flanked by two ruinous lodges, Sir Thomas could not help stopping the carriage, and looking wistfully in. "What a glorious avenue of trees!" cried he, "I have not seen such oaks north of the Trent!—this approach should lead to some place of consequence."

"I am glad you admire it," replied Phœbe; "I believe, yes,—this must be the back approach to Mile Park."

"O then, we will take a nearer view of the premises—we have a long afternoon before us, remember:—and your father, now that I come to think of it, did once say something about comparing his place with Chatsworth—we will explore the same."

"By all means," cried Lady Dulwich gaily.

"Open the gate, Almond," and before Phœbe could raise any objection, they were driving down a spacious avenue descending a slope, and bordered by a double row of magnificent old trees. The carriage road was overgrown with long grass. Pheasants and hares beyond count, seemed to start up from beneath the horses' feet. "I prophesy," said Sir Thomas, "that I shall come here for a day's shooting, before I am a week older."

"I wonder," said his mother, "that Mr. Herbert can find in his heart to allow such fine grounds as these to fall into such a state of decay."

"Papa never liked the place," said Phœbe; "and yet, to my certain knowledge, he has more than once refused to sell it."

"You must direct us now, Phœbe;" they had by this time reached a point, whence the avenue branched off in two separate directions.

"Upon my word," replied Phœbe, blushing, "it may seem very odd—but I hardly know myself; I have never approached it from this side before. I wanted papa to bring me here for the summer, but he was quite angry with me, for mentioning such a thing."

"Very odd, indeed:" observed Lady Dulwich.

"Well then, I will confide in my own sagacity. Do admire those walnut trees, mother: and Phœbe, you may thank me for a new pleasure, it seems; I thought I should be right; yonder is the house:—upon my word a noble building!" and, as he spoke, they emerged from the avenue upon the clear lawn, in full view of the mansion.

The building was of that mixed style of architecture, commonly called Palladian. It was an extensive, quadrangular pile, with a clock tower over the grand entrance; that clock had not yet been wound up, for fifteen years, at least. The windows were all of them closed; not a pencil of smoke arose from any chimney; the fountain in the midst of a gravelled space before the front door was broken, and its basin choked with weeds; the grass round the house was ill-kept, and one or two degenerate rose-bushes leaned weakly against the rusty blue iron balustrades of the flight of steps, which led to a sort of esplanade under the windows of the principal apartments. So sombre was the entire effect on that still summer's afternoon, that all the three dropped into silence almost involuntarily, and the crashing of the wheels upon the gravel, and the whistle of some wood-bird, half tame from being so long undisturbed, were the only sounds which were heard, as the party drove up to the portal.

"And now to enter this enchanted palace!" said Sir Thomas, running up the steps boyishly, "O, here is a bell!—Mercy on us! what a sound it makes! and who will come to answer it, I wonder? some seneschal with a white beard; some . . . . . I declare, Phœbe, you look frightened."

"Never mind him!" said Lady Dulwich, "we will take care of you! here comes some one at last!—but, bless me! what a number of bolts and bars!—Do not lean against the door—I have a presentiment that it will open with an awful jerk."

And it did so—a respectable looking middle-aged woman presented herself.

"We can see the house," said Lady Dulwich authoritatively. "There is nothing to see, Madam," replied the woman civilly and steadily, "the house is not shown to strangers."

"I think, Markland," said Phœbe coming forward, "you will hardly oppose *our* entrance."

"Lord bless me! Miss Herbert!—what ever in the world—so surprised as I am to see you!—Mr. Herbert is with you, I hope?"

"No matter," cried Sir Thomas, entering unceremoniously,

"why, this hall is most superb!—those Ionic columns are the handsomest things of the kind that I ever saw."

"What a shame it is, not to inhabit such a place!" echoed Lady Dulwich, "if it were mine, I should put up an organ in yonder music gallery, before I were four and twenty hours older."

"And invite your dear five hundred friends to play upon it," replied the Baronet. In such a light mood as this, they presently had exhausted the wonders of the hall; while Phœbe stood a little apart, silently considering how much reproof she should subject herself to, for taking such a liberty;—Mr. Herbert was a man who never forgave a liberty.

"And now the keys! good Madame la Concierge," cried Sir Thomas gaily; "open us all these doors, without delay, I am in the best possible humour for exploring."

"The keys, Sir, my husband has them locked up—and—"

"And where is your husband?—is he locked up?—don't you see, that we wish to inspect every thing? Up stairs or down stairs first, mother?"

"O, up stairs first!" cried Lady Dulwich, humouring her son in his mood of mischief; "and, don't you see yonder bunch of keys? I dare say Mr. Markland has forgotten them; and, as she spoke, she pointed to an immense collection upon a ring, which hung in a niche close by.

"By Jove! so they are; well, we will use them for ourselves."

"But, if you please, Sir . . . ."

"Thank you, Madame la Concierge—I quite understand you; you see I am a positive man. Come, Phœbe!"

"What would I give if Joshua Markland was here!" cried the woman, wringing her hands dismayedly.

"Now, my dear woman! pray take things easily. Why—you might be a jailor's wife indeed.—Come Phœbe! which way first? up stairs, to the left."

"Ay—ay," muttered Markland, looking after them, in great wrath, "to the left! What in the world must I do to get them out of the house?"

While she stood at the top of the stairs, a living picture of vexation, the intruders were heard, trying every door which opened into the long corridor; entering chambers which had never been unclosed for many years, and apparently enjoying their forbidden researches with all the glee of a parcel of children; as the approaching sound of their merriment warned the disturbed housekeeper, that they had examined half the building.

"And now, Madame la Concierge," said Sir Thomas, "think we are satisfied. We have seen nothing worth making

h a fuss about; never a ghost, nor a picture. Is there any precious on the other side of the house?"

"No, Sir—I do not know, Sir," replied Markland, in great agitation, "I have never been in several of the rooms myself,

"O then, there must be the cream of the mystery, depend on it—we will introduce you to the secrets of these closed members—nay—positively, Phœbe, I must teach you a little curiosity, if only to furnish you with *one* fault. There must be something worth seeing, if it be worth hiding."

Lady Dulwich laughed heartily at Phœbe's uneasy face, and they were on the point of entering the corridor, when they were seized by a sound which made itself heard above the highest of their voices;—an outcry, something between the yell of a terrified wild beast, and the shriek of a strong man in his death-struggle, rung from the further end of the right-hand passage, again and again. Markland darted forward, and was out of sight, and round a corner, ere the intruders had recovered from their astonishment at so horrible a sound.

"God bless me! what can this be!" cried Sir Thomas, while the ladies shrunk together in involuntary terror.

"Do not leave us!" cried Lady Dulwich, in an agony of fear, seizing him by the skirts of his coat:—"let us go at once, let us go!" and she attempted to drag him towards the passage.

But ere he could disengage himself from her embrace, a loud scream was heard, and louder than the first,—a scuffling feet,—the rattle of a chain;—and Markland was seen issuing from the passage, crying out, "save me!—help!—murder!"—and pursued by a ghastlier figure than any of the party ever before beheld.

It was a strong middle-aged woman, of a herculean figure, whose face was stamped every bad passion, intensified by misery. Her brilliant eyes were distended to their utmost; her head was overgrown with a felt of shaggy black hair. Her attire was little more than a foul blanket, strapped round her waist; and a broken chain appended to this belt, and the marks about her wrists which had belonged to manacles, told her strictly she had been coerced, and how mighty had been the effects of this present paroxysm of frenzy. From the slight passage close outside the door of her prison-chamber, on which Markland had been accustomed to sleep, she had wrenched out a post, and was pursuing her dismayed keeper with the most fury, when her eye lighted upon the strangers. With a loud, and another inarticulate shout, she rushed toward, snatching her weapon, and aimed a violent blow at Sir



Thomas, who vainly endeavoured to oppose her progress. It descended,—but not as she had directed it—upon the fair forehead of Phœbe. Then the maniac sprang down stairs, and in another instant, the fiendish sound of her lawless laughter was heard upon the lawn without. The unfortunate girl fell at her lover's feet, covered with blood.

"What have I lived to see?" cried Markland. "Heaven have mercy upon us! she is killed! she is killed!—*and by her own mother too!*"

The confusion and dismay of the ensuing scene baffle description. Lady Dulwich fell into fits: Sir Thomas despatched one servant for Mr. Herbert, another for medical assistance for Phœbe, who was only severely wounded. Markland, unable to face the consequences of her carelessness,—the fury of her master, and the expulsion of her husband from his place of trust—left the house on some pretext or other, and took refuge in a neighbouring cottage.

In the midst of this distress, a common farm servant rendered the most efficient assistance, by summoning Mrs. Pritchard to the spot where the thought and delicacy of a woman were so eminently needed. By degrees the neighbourhood was raised with the report that the misguided Mrs. Herbert,—who, it had been believed had died of a brain fever many years ago,—was yet alive, and had escaped from her confinement. No wonder that Mr. Herbert had always been unwilling to live at Mile Park! No wonder that Joshua Markland and his wife had been so unsociable, and had so constantly refused admittance to guest or neighbour!

Anna Oldacre was left alone, almost within hearing of the disturbances which filled the long-neglected mansion. The story of the shocking scene which had taken place, was not long in reaching her ear:—she heard it in silence, but the fountains of ancient feeling which had been, as it were, seared dry for so many years, burst open again with all their former strength, sweeping away all the reserve and pettiness with which years and small trials had encrusted her character. The love, the resentment, the amazement of old times, awoke again in all their first freshness, and she sat amid a crowd of images of other days, called up from Memory's tomb, till the evening had set, and night had grown old, without adverting to the flight of time, the darkness of the sky, or the coldness of the air which sighed through her open casement.

On a sudden the dull sound of stealthy footsteps was heard in the garden below; then a lumbering noise as if something heavy had fallen; then a low scream, like the cry of some wild animal, when it lies down to die, exhausted after a long

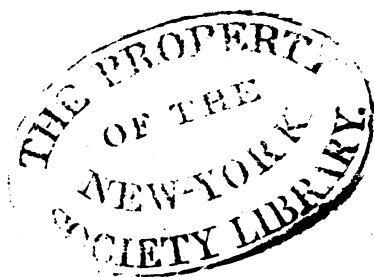
uel chase. Anna was startled by this interruption of verie; but wound up to a state of mind far beyond all She looked out and listened; all was still; she called, "Who is there?" but no one made answer.

same moaning was again repeated, much more faintly afore. Then, for the first time, a cold shiver of fear ran h her limbs; and opening a sashed door, she stepped out upon the small lawn, and eagerly looked forward e dull shadow. She had scarcely stood an instant, trem-with the excess of agitation, when her knees were embraced orrible figure;—a pale, bleeding maniac, with her insuff-overing rent to fragments by the briers and furze bushes h which she had found her way, and her hands and feet bly wounded. By the light of the lamp which Anna l, she could see, that the passion which had blazed in es of the miserable woman was dying fast; and there arcely enough strength left in her hoarse voice to gasp

Hide me! hide me!—they are coming!"

'ho?—O God!—What is this?"

was Herbert's wife. Hide me for mercy's sake!—they atch me,—and I shall be starved again:—*they have hold heart!*" As she spoke, she fell back:—her hands re-their hold—one more deep groan, and all was still! — story is told. Lady Dulwich, disgusted by so unexpected exposure, broke off the match between her son and Phœbe rt; and, to veil the thing a little, tried to lay the blame upon the poor girl's shattered health and lost beauty, give out that the non-fulfilment of Sir Thomas' engage-was her own express choice. I have never been able to the fortunes of Anna Oldacre from this time forth. It timated to her that Mr. Herbert was about to bequeath a f his vast property to her, in the event of her surviving —and soon after this she disappeared from the cognisance her friends, though I have heard it hinted that she is liv-road, and in the strictest retirement. On Mr. Herbert's there appeared many paragraphs in the newspapers an-ing that if she or her heirs would apply to Messrs. - and ———, Solicitors, King's Bench Walk, London, they would hear of something to their advantage; but I heard that the advertisements were answered.



# SKETCHES

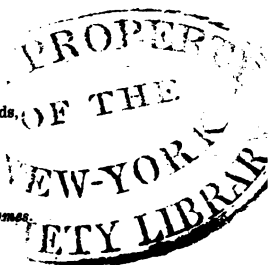
OF

## A SEA-PORT TOWN.

BY HENRY F. CHORLEY.

"Thou lovest the woods, the rocks, the quiet fields,  
But tell me, if thou canst, enthusiast wain,  
Why the broad town to thee no gladness yields?  
If thou lov'st nature, sympathise with man—  
For he and his are parts of nature's plan."

*The Author of Corn Law Rhymes.*



IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA :

E. L. CAREY & A. HART.

1836.

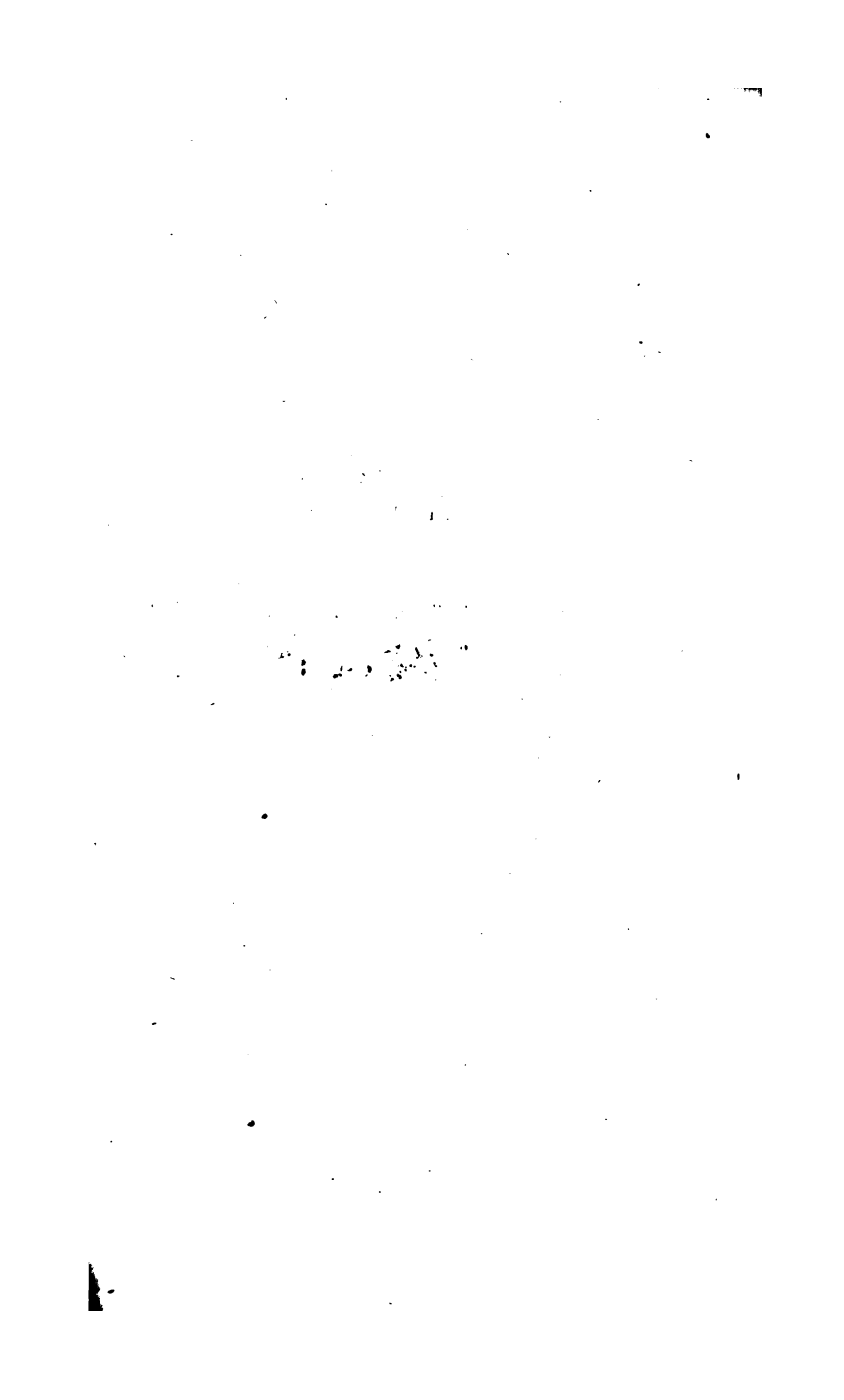


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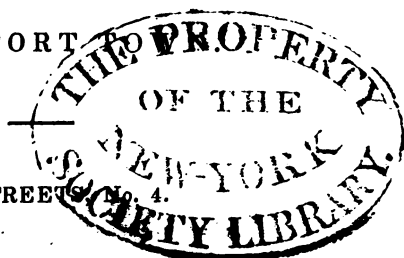
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SKETCHES  
OF  
A SEA PORT

THE STREETS

BROKERS' SHOPS.



is no day for the public streets;—it is a day when is stirring, and the weather too dingy and too cheerless, the capricious or allow the delicate in health to roam—a Wednesday, too—that dullest day of all the seven, qually remote from the bloom of the beginning, and the of the end of the week. Yesterday, and on Monday, oughfares were all alive with the splendour of our reauty and fashion. There was a bazaar to which fair locked in hundreds to be squeezed to death, (so they ) and to spend their money—and enjoyed themselves in the morning, that half of them were too weary to the ball at night. If they go out, then, it will not be or to promenade, but to pay quiet confidential calls; gentlemen must make up for being their humble ser- n those two days, by abiding by their ledgers and heir bales of cotton “from morn till dewy eve.” Come t us quit the public streets, and take our chance among vays and blind alleys of this large and populous city.



It may be, that in point of entertainment we shall fare no worse for forsaking the genteeler parts of the town, and exposing ourselves to the chance of being scouted as idlers by the busy mer whom we may happen to encounter.

And yet the regions into which we are about to penetrate were quarters of note, scarcely thirty years ago. Where are now ware houses, distilleries, law-stationers' offices, etc. etc. etc. creditable people did not disdain to live and flourish "once upon a time. Yonder large double house, with a portico, was formerly the resort of such style and such beauty as our town then boasted. You may see that it has been the residence of no common man; it is carefully finished with Venetian windows, and a heavy enriched door case. The hall has been paved with black and white marble; the staircase and its balustrades are of black Jamaica mahogany; the ceilings of the principal rooms are elaborately stuccoed over in such wreathy patterns of festoons as surrounded the allegorical devices of Cipriani; and the room which had been the dining-room, now devoted to the trading uses of a wholesale grocer, a chimney-piece, carved in oak, and so delicately were its partridges nestling among ears of corn and autumn flowers, executed, that some wandering connoisseur was at the pains of purchasing and removing the same, declaring it to be a choice specimen of the handywork of Grimling Gibbons. We could be melancholy and sentimental, if we chose when we look in through the door, which now stands open all the day long, and remember how those for whose comfort and pleasure that stately mansion was built and beautified, have all passed away—ay, melancholy and sentimental, in the midst of drays and cursing carters, and the chemical steam of half a dozen manufactories, which, one would think, was sufficient to exterminate the entire race of people who were compelled to breathe it, day after day.

Upon that vacant ground, now barricadoed from the street by wallings, stood, a few years ago, a small church—a quaint little octagonal building, without the slightest pretensions to any style in architecture—dingy without, and dingy within;—a place where you might be sure that the '*tableau vivant*' of Hogarth's sleeping congregation was exhibited every Sunday afternoon, and sometimes even during morning service. I shall never forget the tone of its old asthmatic organ, nor the particular wheeze with which that venerable instrument was wont to indulge itself in the midst of its duty—so like the puffing of some puffy valetudinarian, for whom the most moderate exercise is too much:—and the organ in question was never called upon to do more than bear a steady accompaniment to some

half a dozen old tunes, which served all the year round, Christmas and Easter included. Moreover, the Reverend who performed the service there was much in the style of Doctor Dozeadeal, who (as the story-book tells us,) was considered to be the perfect model of a gospel minister, uniting, in his own person, the rare qualifications of a sonorous delivery, a peremptory appetite, whereby he was considerate enough to regulate the length of his discourses, and a choice selection of proverbs. Yes, he was well suited to his audience, which, of latter days, for the most part, consisted of substantial tradesmen and their steady wives, who never dreamed of the possibility of such a thing as cutting a dash, and might be seen plodding thither, carrying their prayer books wrapped up in clean pocket-handkerchiefs, and followed by a flock of orderly children,—at least half a dozen years after you might have “sought all the town and not met them elsewhere.” Clergyman, clerk choir, and congregation all declined at the same time, with a gradual and serene decadence; and when they became extinct, as no one seemed able or willing to step forward and take their vacant places, St. Catharine’s was doomed to fall: great was the dust thereof!

There was another older and yet duller church in this neighbourhood, up yonder narrow street, which now seems to be the *ne plus ultra* of dirt and tumult; but it has been long dismantled and turned to baser uses. Could you bring an old inhabitant to this corner, he would tell you that in ten, at least, of those dingy houses, lived celebrated toasts or opulent merchants. But we will turn aside a little,—we are entering upon a scene in which it will require no hearsay or association to assist us to gather our entertainment.

This long narrow street, half a Rag-fair, half an out-of-doors magazine of upholstery—the Monmouth street of our town, yet more various in the wares which its shops expose than its metropolitan prototype, is well worth examination. Look at its houses—small, dirty, mean, and overflowing with such an excess of population, that it is impossible to refrain from wondering how it is all to be lodged at night. What with the children, and the crockery-ware, and the tables, chairs, bureaux, &c. &c. which encroach upon the causeway as far as our rigorous mayors will allow it, it is next to impossible to take three steps at a time without interruption. And then, too, the owners of these premises, mostly women of that certain age at which fluency arrives at its culminating point, arrest you in your progress with all manner of strange and seductive temptations. Do you not want a cheap, neat easy chair—the cheapest thing in the world, for only three and twenty shillings? or a cradle

and rocking-horse, which only require painting to be as good as new—or a fancy dress? and, to entice you to purchase this last, the fair trader holds up a tunic of pink and silver, which the neighbours round about regard as the quintessence of splendour, which you can refer, with half a glance, to the wardrobe of some Sans-Pareil or Garrick theatre of other days. Will you buy none of these, gentle and most economical companion? It must be confessed that you are hard to please on a shopping excursion.

But we may admire, if we cannot afford to spend:—for instance, the contents of this next shop are such as detain us against our will. Who that has ever felt the pleasure of looking at paintings, could pass this graphic representation of Daniel in the Lion's Den, without a tribute of praise? The prophet is represented girt about his loins with a blue garment, apparently much afraid:—and nicely poised upon the end of a beam of divine light and favour which hath darted through a rounded peep-hole in the roof, in the most mathematical manner imaginable, which, at the same time, cheers the victim of the law of the Medes and Persians, and affords him a seat. We will say nothing of his complexion, to avoid questions of doubt—for we know that in the East people never prayed until they had washed their faces. The lions, six as substantial looking animals, as a uniform *standing* drab, and considerable breadth of beam (to use the sailor's phrase) can make them, are sitting round the seer, in a circle, with smug civil visages; and toupees combed up and curled, as a King's wild beasts in ordinary should have, and their tails turned up with amazement in the regular form of the letter S. Far away, at the top of the beam, appears Darius, who, you may see by his eyes, has not slept a wink, dressed in a gay printed bedgown, Wellington boots, and moustachios which would make those on the sign of the Saracen's head look a mere trifle beside them. You see that the King is coming to peep at what is going on, and would not be his lords and chief rulers for the world. Why this rare piece alone is worth a walk to come and see! and the next picture—a landscape wrought in needle-work—though not possessed of the thrilling interest of its historical neighbour, is also a valuable composition of its kind. The chief objects which it represents are two shepherds, larger than the trees by which they are sitting, and one sheep placed between them—the embroideress could no more—a castle of slate coloured wool, and clouds “laid out” with compasses, with the artist's name, Anne Jordan, September 9th, 1808 flying on a scroll midway in the heavens, the said scroll being as large as shepherd, sheep, and castle put together.

Are you too grave or too matter-of-fact to smile at these specimens of art? Look into yonder cobwebbed corner, and you shall find what shall touch another string than that of mirth—a genuine picture of some nameless lady, torn from its frame, and sent hither to be disposed of as lumber. That picture may have been painted by Hudson or Jervas, or even Gainsborough, for some doting mother or proud husband—and, lo!—a few years gone over—it is here, unprized, and thrust out of sight—the same, which it may be, that the best room in the proudest mansion in our Sea-port town was hardly thought good enough to hold. That sweet face wears, in its expression, too much of the Englishwoman, too much of the gentlewoman, too much of the beauty to have merited so dishonourable a doom. That simple, yet elegant dress—an open *négligée* of flowered brown silk, with the hair combed back, and confined by a red ribbon, the ends whereof float carelessly down upon the firm white shoulder,—an additional evidence that the original of the portrait possessed a refined and delicate taste:—that sweet, composed smile, which time will never strike out of the lips so long as one shred of the canvass hangs upon another, look strangely out of place in their present mean abode. Was there no faithful servant—no common acquaintance to rescue this lovely image from such undeserved degradation? “That picture, Sir, was you talking about?—my husband bought it at Mr. Vernon’s sale, ten years ago—when he failed, Sir;—and it cost us fifteen shillings, let alone cleaning—old rubbishing thing!”

What an affecting chapter might be written on the subject of neglected pictures! What conjectural histories of the deeds, and thoughts of their originals might one build up!—The greatest impression of dreariness ever conveyed to my mind, was, when, in rambling through a deserted and haunted house in Shropshire, I came upon the only remaining vestige of its inhabitants—the picture of a serene and smiling lady, looking from the wall into mouldering and forsaken chambers, which she had once beheld decorated and furnished, and peopled with friends and kindred:—and beneath, upon the floor, I found a pair of butterfly wings, which had belonged to some gay creature, long ago dead of imprisonment and weariness. What numbers of similar incidents might not any one with an eye and an heart gather, if he set himself to the task! But these fancies are somewhat out of place before a broker’s shop.

Here too, is old China, made in those good ancient days when fineness of texture was studied more than elegance of form: and on which may be seen fathers with shaven heads and mini-kin mouths, grasping the feet of their daughters, (when the

latter are discovered eloping) through windows and over bridges, and family parties drinking tea on the horizon, as large as life, and in the total defiance of all the laws of perspective. Here are not a few of those little tea-pots, the sight of whose shadows on the wall could make one giggle when in an unwise mood, and huge jars into which you might concentrate the bloom of the entire garden of roses; and close to these, O shameful juxtaposition! is stationed a common nest of shop-drawers, flaring in all the vulgarity of mahogany and green paint; thus placing the venerable relics of spicy-aired boudoirs, and courtly tea-drinkings in much such a dishonourable predicament, as a gentlewoman of the old school would conceive she had fallen into, if she was perforce compelled to endure the near neighbourhood of some pert half-fledged apprentice boy of the nineteenth century.

But we must pass on our way:—a few steps more, and we shall change this scene, so fruitful in speculations and reminiscences, for the dirt and bustle of a public street. Who shall despair of finding food for imagination, if we have proved that it may exist in a town, in a common broker's shop? Who saith that Poetry has disappeared from the world, and that the age is a dull mechanical one? Let the propounder of such uncomfortable doctrines inquire whether or not the want lies in his own heart; whether or not he have rightly cultivated the gifts which have been bestowed upon him. Nay, let him do no more than turn this corner, and stand with us in this the busiest thoroughfare of our busy town, a street of steam-boat and stage-coach offices. Let him watch the faces of those who depart; of the father who comes to see his ailing daughter safely launched upon her long journey, and peruses, with an earnest and civil anxiety, the countenances of her fellow-travellers:—let him remark that tall bright-eyed handsome lad, who springs from the box-seat of the North Mail, with a joy which has *home* in every gesture:—let him follow with his eye the picturesque palmer-like figure of that old beggar, with his bare white head, and his belted frieze coat, and staff;—in short, let him discover any trait of human feeling or human sympathy, and go home, and deny that there is Poetry left in the world, if he dare!

## THE BLESSINGS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD.

How many an emigrant's wife, transplanted from merry Yorkshire or canny Scotland, to the prairies or cleanings of America, has, like Kathleen O'Moore, "sat at the door one cold afternoon," when all her bustling household work was done; and, taking some tedious piece of mending on her lap, perhaps the identical waistcoat in which her John or Joseph succeeded in making conquest of her heart, or some stocking, the deficiency of whose heel tells of thick shoes and muddy roads, has sighed, as she looked over the wide landscape before her; and remembered, with a regretful heart, the happy days, though not so rich as the present, when she enjoyed the pleasures and privileges of good neighbourhood, has sighed for her native village, wherein thirteen trusty and well-beloved gossips were within call, as she sat under the shadow of her own porch;—the least communicative of whom could tell what the Vicar's lady had worn on Sunday, and how Sir William had run over a little girl in the church-yard, and which way the hounds had gone that morning; and why the Velocity was so late in stopping to change horses;—and, in fulness of her murmuring heart, the aforesaid emigrant's wife, out of sheer lack of gossipry, (the children being disposed of in their cribs to take their afternoon's sleep, and the helps' being all abroad, and at work in their newly-made corn-fields,) has begun to recall to her own discomfort of heart, all the dismal tales which she has ever heard concerning the evils which befall settlers in such lonely places: stories of rattlesnakes, and painted Indian war-whooping innocent people out of their first sleep to get up and be tomahawked; of snows that last for months, and frosts that make cruel havoc of the ears and noses of the unwary, and woods on fire for hundreds of miles at a time:—and she sits, thus tormenting herself over her stitchery, until, in the midst of every token of plenty enough to gladden the heart of any reasonable woman, she falls into what some lively American writer emphatically calls "a solid pet," all for the want of some one to talk to,—some one to quarrel with,—some good neighbour or other!

And this woman may have been, in her mother-land, the veriest shrew in the whole parish; keeping upon good terms with no one for a week at a time; living in the midst of a perpetual whirlpool of crosses and vexations; a woman of no consequence among her own people, and now the mistress of flocks and herds, and of much wool and fine linen. Nor is she wholly

without society. Her husband (when he is not too tired) can talk of his day's labour, and the profits of the next crop;—her children ought to be a source of perpetual amusement and occupation to her mind. No matter,—they are not neighbours; and she thinks herself as much cut off from her kind, as if she were the solitary inhabitant of a lighthouse, with only a sea-gull to scream a "good morning" to her as it passed, and the wash of the ocean to lull her to sleep.

Well,—it is, at times, hard to imagine such a state of mind in an overgrown and overflowing place like this, where, do what you will, you cannot escape from the consequences and conveniences of a neighbourhood; a place, too large and too miscellaneous peopled for you to wish to maintain an intercourse with a tenth part of the personages whom circumstances locate in your vicinity; and not arrived at the stoically indifferent state of the metropolis, where you may live next door to a man for five years without knowing his face or figure; and where that singular masquerade took place of the jealous husband, who disguised himself, and giving out that he was dead, took lodgings in a house opposite to his own, to ascertain the truth of certain suspicions which had disturbed his peace of mind. No; we are precisely on that most inconvenient footing of knowing just enough of each other to be annoyed, and little more; and I should think that it should be hard to find a bachelor (your married folk have no time to be troubled with such small concerns) who had lived for ten years in this place, who would not say Amen to all the dissatisfaction it is impossible not to express when one takes pen in hand to treat of a "good neighbourhood."

For, thanks to the pie-crust style of architecture, which, for the most part, obtains in this good town of ours—you do not live alone in your own house:—your neighbour lives with you, to all intents and purposes, if you cannot escape from hearing his proceedings; from the sound of his gruff voice as he swears at the cook, because his dinner is spoilt, and the squalling of his child, who cannot sleep itself, and resolves that you, likewise, shall not. I cannot forget the melancholy case of a certain Benedick of my acquaintance, who, by much persecution of this nature, was metamorphosed from one of the best natured men in existence, into one of the most uncharitable and atrabilious; and instead of ending his days amongst us in easy tranquillity, varied by the occasional relaxation of society—has fled, to the very land of prairies and clearings,—for aught I know.

My friend was an excellent patient man, country-born and country bred; for whom the wheel of town life went by many degrees much too fast; a man used to the regular solace of a

a three o'clock dinner, (though I could never hear of action in the mornings which made such indulgence,) and who, for forty years of his life, had fallen to no harsher sound than the creeping of the wind among eaves or bare boughs, or the tinkling of rain. He inherited somewhat exceeding a competence, on the death of his only cousin; and took the valiant resolution of coming to reside in our good town for the purpose of spending his life and enjoying himself.

When such a blunder was made. Many weeks passed over, and his ear was familiarized to the nuisances of watchmen striking chimes; but as the houses on either side of the tenement wherein he took up his abode were untenanted, and his only neighbour a widow woman unblessed by a family, received only once at a time, he congratulated himself no little on the choice of abode which he had made; and went to business in embellishing his drawing-room with choice pictures, dainty pictures, and other luxuries, "not in the least inconsistent with Mrs. Bent. He reckoned, like her father before him, who has planned schemes of uninterference."

Three months from the time when he had hung up the engraving of *Psyche* above his chimney-piece, and the curious *secrétaire* into a niche of ambiguous shape, the right of his own was taken;—and within another month a young couple had resolved to pitch their tents in the spacious mansion to the left; to which these two other had been affixed in the course of a very few months,—and did not fall was not the fault of the architect, whose choice of timber, bricks, and mortar, was enough to make an old professor of the Art, a century old in his sepulchre, and stamp down the gingerbread handiwork of his descendant.

A musical, gentle reader? Do you know the torment of some too well known melody droned out of a hand-thumped out upon a piano-forte *just behind the reach of* that is to say, so far from you, that you only catch when every thing else is still; but in such fragments, that your fancy supplies the lost links of the chain, cannot, for your life, help murmuring "Cherry ripe," "anti,"—(O, why should such a melody have been vulgar street popularity!)—till you become a mere machine, for that one tune. That is an awful misery, as any man's ear can testify. But who can describe the more distress which that poor wretch must prove, "who is not in concord of sweet sounds," if he be unhappily com-



pelled to abide in the neighbourhood of any one devoted to the sedulous practice of any instrument! The house to the right of the one occupied by the peaceable Mr. Lancaster had no sooner exhibited its placard of "Apartments," than its rooms were engaged by three brothers, ranging in age from eighteen to four-and-twenty; young men of small means, and amazing animal spirits,—who had been launched into our town to push their way in the world; two of them in merchants' offices, and the third, as he had a turn for the fine arts, by learning to become a performer upon as many musical instruments as there was the remotest chance of his making any money by; and to further this object, he was industrious enough to begin by taking lessons four times a week, and to practise in proportion; which practising was always carried on in the day time, before his brothers returned home from their coffee and tallow,—“who,” to use their own words, “would not stand Ralph’s confounded noise.”

The new light which his vicinity to the genius shed upon honest Lancaster’s mind, as to the extent of labour requisite to ensure proficiency in music, did not bring with it comfort, commensurate with the increase of intelligence. My worthy friend was an old fashioned orderly person; with a small tidy range of ideas of his own; and at first, the novelty was so startling that he was not aware of its inconvenience. He had no comprehension of music—beyond *a tune*, and wondered patiently for some time, what all this jumble of discordant sound could mean. Ere long, wonder began to give place to weariness—a succession of showery days confined the man of no occupation to the house; and he was compelled, hour after hour, to endure the see-saw-ing of the violincello, and the howling of the flute, “which,” he said, “he did believe must have something the matter with it. Nor was this all. Every evening brought the musician’s brethren home, with their stentorian voices, and their heavy boots;—a friend or two occasionally, and sometimes a dog that barked, and was therefore to be kicked out. His ideas were doomed to undergo further disarrangement by discovering that the youths in question, were not too old to romp; would run about their room vociferously, mounting upon chairs, and jumping thence to the floor, with as much zest, as if they had been proprietors of rattles and bells, clad in frocks and trousers, instead of merchant’s clerks.

Few trials reach their *acme* at once:—and to try poor Mr. Lancaster’s patience yet farther, his evil stars decreed that he should sprain his ankle so severely, as to confine him to the house for many weeks. Like the hermit in the ballad, “his friends were few,”—and his calamity befell him in the gloomy month of November, when the sun did not condescend to peep in upon him

seek to lighten his intolerable ennui. But sunshine or shade made no difference to his neighbour:—his master had unlearned him to be his most diligent pupil for nothing! Yesterday, he played, and played on: until my poor friend's spirits gave way under the burden of so much sound, he vainly attempted to *wade through* Kenilworth, and interrupted at least every five minutes, by the recurrence in high note, which was too much for mortal patience, he kicked the book off the sofa with a peevish exclamation, and summoning his precise landlady, desired her, herke in a message to the next door, "His compliments, would be very much obliged if the young gentleman kind enough not to fiddle *quite* so loud."

With no good will that Mrs. Bent departed upon her. So keen had the ears of her inmate grown, in the course of tutoring education to which they had been subjected, he distinctly heard her discreet knock at the next door—the same servant who took the message upstairs—the sudden change of the minor scale, which Mr. Ralph Bicknell was practising—and his answer: "My compliments, and none in myself directly."—"Lord have mercy on me!" querulous invalid, "and will he bring *that* thing with order?"

Two minutes, a foot—(O how well he knew its sound!) he descended the stairs with a smart and rapid tread; of the much injured man's *sanctum* was banged open, an offender entered:—a tall fair lad, with a long thin neck, thin legs—a wild pair of large grey eyes—a wilder whitey-brown hair. The soles of his substantial boots were shod with nails, his throat encased in a worn and weak black stock, the cuffs of his thread-bare blue frock coat were frayed up. He appeared, Mr. Lancaster thought, the very son of misrule and disturbance,—partial parents had said, a rascal and genius. After leaving an earthy mark upon the carpet, wherever he strode, he sat down violently close to the invalid.

"Very sorry, Sir—" he began.

"Thank you, I am not deaf," replied Mr. Lancaster peevishly. The genius did not take the hint, and continued in the same key.

"I am very sorry, Sir, very sorry indeed, to find that I incommodate you by my practising, and you unwell too." To improve his disposition on the part of his guest, the invalid drew his hand feebly across his eyes with a gesture which was intended to be expressive of pain; and, with the other reached a

bottle from a table close to the sofa. His finesse was lost upon the genius.

"What to do," continued he, "I am sure, I don't know—I cannot play anywhere else, or at any other time, or a moment less, I am sure. I'll tell you what, Sir; your best remedy would be to take up an instrument yourself."

The sick man's honest wonder at this proposal entirely destroyed the possibility of his maintaining the further appearance of extreme languor. He started eagerly up—"What!—God bless me, Sir!—*me!*—do you take me for a fool?—Good morning to you, Sir, if you please."

"Nay but, as you seem to have so much spare time, I thought—"

"Good morning, if you please, Sir, I will hear no more; I do not like being made game of."

"Well, Sir,—I can only say,—" replied the genius, rising, totally at a loss how to account for such a warm reception of a proposal, which he had intended to wind up by recommending a favourite master. But Mr. Lancaster cut him short with—

"Say nothing, if you please, Sir; good morning to you."

There was therefore nothing more for the young musician to do, but to depart.

"Take up an instrument indeed!" cried the invalid, when the door had closed upon this visitor; "the impertinent puppy!—I would give fifty pounds to clear the neighbourhood of him!"

Mr. Lancaster's temper was not much improved by hearing the peals of laughter, which broke out again and again from the neighbouring apartments, when the young men were all assembled in the evening; "Ay—ay! a fine joke they think it, I dare say!—Take up an instrument indeed!" He fretted himself into an absolute fever that night.

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A man must have been humiliated by sickness, to enter into the comprehension of the serene enjoyment which may be derived from looking out of his chamber windows, and watching what goes on in the parti-coloured world without. I am bold to say, from experience, that there are pleasures less worth notice than this; having myself known what it was to be reduced for amusement to a prospect of windmills from an upper window, to find companionship in their motion, and beauty, in the changing lights and shadows, which sunshine and clouds let fall upon them. One of my whirling comforters, too, was repaired during my confinement.—Judge then of Mr. Lancaster's scorn and wrath, when, on being wheeled into his sitting-room on the ensuing morning, he perceived that a thick muslin

blind, totally shut out the prospect offered by the street below. He rung his bell violently.

"Well, Sir," said Mrs. Bent, meekly presenting herself to him.

"Well, ma'am!" replied he in a tone of sarcastic dignity—pointing with his stick as he spoke, to the offending draperies, "what does all this mean, that you have taken away my view?"

"If you please, Sir—" and the widow played with her apron string.

"I tell you, I don't please—take that thing down instantly!—I declare that nuisance in the next house is beginning already!"

Mrs. Bent kept her ground, "A forward young gentleman, if you please, Sir, on the opposite side of the way, who has hurt himself like you, Sir . . ."

"Well, woman! and what is that to me!"

"He has a telescope, Sir; and sits watching everything that goes on. Judith saw him laughing, yesterday, all the time she was laying the cloth for your dinner."

"A telescope!" cried the invalid in dismay.

"Yes, Sir. I know Mrs. Morland, and she says, he says, he should not know how to get the day over without it, and Doctor Whitwell complains he is so restless, Sir, that he don't know when he will get better again."

"You may go—you may go," replied her lodger laconically.

His resolution was taken. Within an hour he had summoned a conveyance, having, with Judith's assistance, packed up such of his treasures as were most portable, and, in spite of the forebodings of Mrs. Bent, who threatened him with lameness for the rest of his days—set off in search of a quieter neighbourhood; with what success, we may perhaps see on some future occasion.

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## A CHAPTER UPON SUBURBS.

HOWEVER interesting our good town may be to those who remember how wonderfully commerce has extended its boundaries within the last four years—however many may be the tokens which call upon them to admire its increasing spirit and prosperity, I am persuaded that there is not a place in all England,

more scantily furnished with *sights* to be seen, than the one of which I write. And, what is worse, if within its circle of smoke there is nothing to requite the pilgrimages of those who are cathedral hunters, and love to find the houses wherein great men have been born, and to gather relics from their graves, and will go miles to walk down a flight of wishing-steps; or to explore deserted mansions with their dust-covered windows; if Dublin beat us hollow in the article of architectural magnificence, and Chester, and Shrewsbury, and fifty other places of meaner note, surpass us in antiquities—crosses—conduits—arches—walls—I am constrained, alas! to own, that, for the most part, our environs offer no compensation for the poverty within their boundaries, a poverty, which makes the lionising of strangers a task of some difficulty. For the most part they are barren and flat, rarely affording the luxury of a prospect, and more rarely still the novelty of an object sufficient to recompense the most easily contented of excursionizers, for the damages done to his own, or his horse's shoes.

Yet, in attempting a picture of our Sea-Port Town—it were surely as unjust and discourteous to omit all mention of its suburbs, as it would be, totally to forget the chrysalis in the gay butterfly, which springs from “its cell of clay,”—for you behold in them, the rudiments of a city's spread, the dying struggles of Nature, the first efforts of man's handy-work. Look at yonder trampled field, of late the lists for school boys' holiday tournament—the uttermost point to which little children, dwelling in the heart of the town, could straggle out, to fill their aprons with stunted daisies and dusty dandelions, now crossed by a network of streets in embryo, or dug out into sand quarries, where a noisy and debased people carry on their trade, in the midst of a ceaseless hubbub of coarse ribaldry. Pass over the same desolate tract again, when a few months shall have gone by—it will be found desolate no more. The streets will be completed, the houses have arisen in goodly rows—glazed, and painted, and occupied; the windows daintily set out with gay furniture, and cards to tempt single men to fix their wandering fancies, to say nothing of the further inducement of a smart ringletted head, *not* peeping over the blinds—or, (for the benefit of bachelors of a certain age) a comfortable motherly looking widow woman, standing on the steps without her bonnet. Walk through that street again, before two years have passed, and you shall find it leading you to further encroachments upon the daisies and dandelions aforesaid, perhaps even bending their peremptory course towards the demolition of some old and worn out garden, in which flowers and fruits have long ceased to flourish, owing to the approach of steam, smokes

and evil odours, and which is now to be abandoned to the advancing march of our enterprising and populous city.

Well, such tokens of the spread of wealth and activity, all morally delightful though they be, have, at times, a saddening effect upon certain spirits, loudly reminding them of the change which involves everything around and within us—the change, which year by year carries away our nearest and dearest; and it may be, breaks the ties of some friendship, which was undertaken in the hope of its perpetuity. And when I stand in this trim cheerful-looking street, and remember how few years have elapsed, since it was a field, whereunto cricketers and others did resort to play, myself among the number; and how, in the course of those few years, old thoughts, feelings, and wishes, have been as completely obliterated, as the turf of the meadow—when I think of school-days and school-fellows—and how the light-hearted spirit of the first has faded out of me, like some impression of a dream, and how the others are scattered hither and thither, like beads when their string is snapped—I forget in the melancholy sense of the insecurity of all our hopes and possessions to rejoice in the prosperity, which is extending this great city day by day, and the wealth, which, year by year, is purifying the corrupt places of its heart, and replacing old crumbling ruins and noisome alleys by stately buildings and spacious streets.

But to cease from this needless mournfulness—so pernicious an indulgence—let us think of the splendid exception we possess to the general censure which has been passed upon the environs of our Sea Port Town—let us speak of “our own imperial River!”—Let us, for the moment, leave its shipping out of the question—stately East Indian—trim American—rakish schooner—quaint looking Dutchman (like a craft which had sailed out of one of Van Goyen or Vandervelde’s pictures) and think only of the wide stream, with its busy shores on either side. Let us turn our backs upon its *embouchure*, with the fort, and the lighthouse, of which and of some lonely passing sail, I have so often seen the setting sun make a picture of rare brilliancy. Let us look before us, (we are in a boat) as far as the bend of the stream, where sloping uplands, backed by one or two peculiarly formed hills, give its waters such a lake-like character;—remark, on the left, the almost endless grove of masts—the long symmetrical lines of sea wall—the town arising mass above mass, and, in the distance, lost among vapour—and on the right, lively villages, fast hurrying on to emulate the gaiety and completeness of a town, built in that choice and mixed style of architecture, which cries aloud for a name to

characterise it withal. We have passed them—notice, as we advance, on the one side of the river, the spire of a respectable old church; and, on the other, at that waste and dismal point where the country has long ceased to end, and the town has not yet begun,—the tall house—one of those places upon which the sun never seems willing to shine—a spot which stands out dark and singular in the midst of the brightest July landscape—an object to which the eye returns as surely as it seeks out some lean, black, ill-conditioned looking Bravo who stands apart from a crowd, more frequently than the fairest or best clad personage of the assembly.

The tall house *must* have a story belonging to it, though no one has, as yet, shown the wit or retentiveness to invent or remember one;—a ghost-story to be sure.—You do not believe in the possibility of haunted houses so near large towns?—you laugh at the idea of a disembodied spirit revisiting the Earth amid the sound of bells and the hum of multitudes—and would rob the populous city of the dear delights of supernatural occurrences! Why, far more awful are the traditions which cling to cities, than any which make ghastly the long avenue and the deserted hall house, in the depths of the country! What think you of the portents which alarmed the Londoners before the awful visitation of the plague? of the fiery sword which hung in the heavens and rained blood? and the other foreboding prodigies so incomparably described by Defoe? What think you of the phantom camp, which, in the days of the strife between Crescent and Cross, was wont to appear and encircle the stout city of Prague, when the enemy was at hand;—the fitful blasts of its far off trumpets breaking the stillness of midnight, and its pale banners streaming in the moonshine? Or of the cry of the Wild Huntsman and his spectre hounds which were heard in the streets of Valenciennes at midnight, not long before the Battle of Waterloo;—a tale which the Minstrel of Abbotsford was not ashamed to tell, and which it therefore becomes no meaner hand to touch. Surely these superstitions are none the less fearful because the hearts of multitudes have thrilled at their belief?—And if, giving fancy free rein, we suppose that the spirits of evil are allowed at any time peculiar power over the Earth,—what place could they choose wherein to work their wicked will, in preference to a town, where the extremes of luxury and misery equally dispose the feeble-hearted and unwary to yield to their influences, and crime has a thousand fantastic channels wherein it may run riot, which are utterly unknown to the folders of flocks and the shearers of corn? As I write, I remember a tale which

was told to me not long ago, and which I recall, in virtue of the freedom to digress which I have taken, with the grave assurance that it is a *true story*.

It is many years since a gentleman happened to take up a night's lodging in a room which overlooked a churchyard, situated in the midst of a small town. Whether he was a stranger, a visitor, or a resident there, I cannot, at this moment, call to mind; nor do I mention the name of the town, for obvious reasons. The gentleman was young, strong, and by no means visionary—so that, if he looked out of his window, before he retired to rest at midnight, it was, most probably, to speculate upon the weather. Once having looked, however, he could not withdraw his gaze—his eyes were riveted upon the church—for he perceived, to his great surprise, that a light was burning within it, casting a dull gleam from the windows which surround the altar. He watched for a few moments, in silence, and, it may be supposed, with as much awe as curiosity, until he was certain that there could be no deceit—for the light remained burning in the same place. He was resolved to ascertain what so singular an appearance could mean; but he would not go alone—perhaps he durst not—perhaps he wished for the company of other witnesses besides himself. One or two neighbours were called up, and the keys of the churchyard procured, after some delay. There burned the light still;—and, though their eyes were anxiously fixed upon it, as the gate creaked upon its rusty hinges to admit them, it neither faded nor moved. They approached the building—the windows were so high that, to gain any view of what might be passing in the interior, it was necessary to have recourse to a ladder; this, too, after some delay, they obtained. They applied it to the large window of the chancel,—and there was some deliberation as to who should first ascend. The gentleman who had given the alarm, at last volunteered the service, and, with a panting breath, and a brow covered with beads of dew, reached the top, and looked down—the rest huddling together behind him, and pressing closely one upon another.

The sight he saw was sufficient to shake the courage of the stoutest. The communion table had been uncovered, as for the rite, and drawn to a short distance from the wall. Two candles had been brought from the vestry, lighted, and placed thereon; three figures were seated round it, *playing at cards*! They were young men of licentious habits and notorious impiety—and their flushed countenances and disordered clothes, showed that their present audacious act of sacrilege had been planned at some debauch. But there was a *fourth* at the table—that fourth, a corpse, which had that day been buried in a vault



within the church! It had been dragged from its grave, by these blasphemous rioters, to assist at their game—as if they were resolved that no horror should be wanting. You may think how ghastly the dead face looked when contrasted with their rude and glaring countenances—how chilling was its motionless silence in return to their infernal ribaldry. Those who beheld looked long ere they could believe that living men could dare to perpetrate so enormous a crime. Other inhabitants of the neighbourhood were presently collected; the church door unlocked; and the gamesters interrupted—who could have dared to wait until the game was played out? They were immediately taken into custody—and it was farther discovered that the criminals belonged to some of the most respectable families of the place.

How they had gained an entrance, or what had tempted them to so fearfully wicked an act, was never known—or, if it was known, was never told—for, in consideration of their families, the matter was hushed up, the miscreants allowed to escape from —, to re-appear there no more!——

How far have we wandered from the Tall House?—we have passed it while the tale was a-telling, and must keep its legend for some future day. A few miles beyond it, we shall reach the grounds of a splendid old specimen of the Elizabethan mansion, for which there would be no occasion to fabricate a story—it being already the scene of not a few goblin tales; and if there be a fitting *habitat* for such traditions in this incredulous island of ours, whose retirement is so fast disappearing before the spirit of rail-roads and canals, “it is this, it is!” But we must not grow too monotonous, and exhaust our entire store of legends at once:—and moreover have so far passed the town and its suburbs that tame pheasants are running through the grass at our feet, and rabbits, with their large jewel-like eyes, are hopping across our path, in all the boldness of perfect confidence. We did not promise to digress from the suburbs, but in them. Let us therefore return to the more immediate neighbourhood of the city—and behold, at our will, we are there!

Nay, we have passed through the town, and emerged at its northern outlet, in full view of the mouth of its glorious river. What a scene does it present when a fleet of vessels, long detained by waiting for a fair wind, is at last set free, and is seen in majestic motion, each on its own path, and for its own destination. What a scene for the heart as well as the eye! How many different interests do “those brave winged creatures” contain at such a moment! There go loved ones, who have taken their last farewells of friends, and

perhaps of expectations, and families of hopeful healthy emigrants, whose regret at leaving their own old England is softened by the thought that they are not separated:—all are going together, parents and children:—and that they are setting forth on their voyage to the land of promise, and no taxes. There too, are borne on their way to “wild pleasure of the main,” and enterprize in untried lands, the lawless, the reckless, the unconnected, who leave behind them none to grieve for their excesses, or to provide for them a bright fire, a hearty welcome when they come home:—they have no homes!—And the freight borne by those ships, as various as the human creatures, who now appear scarcely as large as spots upon their decks, (even when followed through a telescope,)—can one look upon a show like this, proudly sweeping before us, across fresh waters, and beneath a breezy and sunshiny heaven, without an inward feeling of exultation, as we think of the resources of our own land, and an inward prayer for every gallant ship as she melts into the sky of the morning!

Further on, up this avenue, are trees;—the oldest within many a mile, and the most important; for, during many a long year they served as landmarks, and are, even now, among the first sights which greet the homeward bound mariner as he enters our river. What a power, as well as venerableness is there in an old tree, when decay has spared it as long as he hath spared these! Stand beneath them, and you see a long perspective of city landscape stretching before you; look up, and you feel how far they are beyond the reach of man's ambition. The merchant prince may pile up his warehouses fifteen stories high, and build his mansion after any elaborate and antique fancy; he may dig for a spring, and spread its waters into a lake; he may patch up a ruin, which shall deceive antiquarian eyes; and even purchase a waterfall—(I know an instance of a bankruptcy, which was brought on by an individual having bought a cascade, and established it in his own park, for which decoration he was unable to pay,) he may imitate anything, by the virtue of the spells of gold, save your verdant stateliness, time-honoured and lofty sycamores! You have outlived his fathers and their toils,—you will survive him and his pride; and his children, it may be, will have run their race of industry or extravagance long before your glory is laid low!

Yes—an old tree is one of our rareties; and these, among the few genuine antiquities we possess, (excepting a cottage, now devoted to the use of a tailor and his goose, where Prince Rupert took up his quarters) since the last arch of the old Tower, and the Gallows Mill, (doth not the name suggest a melodrama?) have been pulled down. Walk in which direc-

tion you will, and you will see little except obtrusive or insipid novelty, unless you come upon a romance of stone, and tunnel, and passage, and archway, and vault, a sort of modern Dom-daniel, which is constantly undergoing addition and destruction, as the caprices of its owner, a rich humourist, dictate. It is a place at which children shudder while they peep in through its gate and listen to the echoes of their own voices, and trembling scamper away, should the stalwart form of the owner of these mysteries be seen approaching. What am I writing? Did I not pass my word to keep clear of characters? *Peccavi*. Enough of the suburbs.

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## THE ADVENTURES OF THE MERCHANT BY CHANCE.

### PART I.

#### THE FREAKS OF A NIGHT.

To look at yonder large and commodious house, neither venerably old, nor flagrantly new, with its five drawing-room windows in the second story, judiciously draped, and its mahogany door, without any particular appendage or ornament to distinguish it from the host of unexceptionable mansions which surround it, you would think must be an antidote to anything like feelings of romance. You could fancy no other story to be told of its inmates, than such as might be found in the chronicle of insipid balls, duller card-parties, and most stupid grand dinners:—the old history of persevering attempts to rise in society a step or two, of languid love-makings, half in jest, half in earnest,—of weddings without any pretence of heart on either side; and yet, for all that, “very suitable connexions,” of funerals with a decent show of grief, and the *regulation* number of mourning coaches; in short, of all that fills up the routine of a common-place existence in a commercial town like this. You shall know better, and learn sometimes to think of him who built that house, when you have heard his history.

Many, many years ago—long enough for Time to have since replaced all the actors in the scene, by another generation, a violent and continuous knocking at the door of a medical man, then residing in the outskirts of the town, startled half the in-

habitants of the unfinished street from their first sleep, on one of the stormiest nights wherein it ever pleased November to vent his rage upon our long suffering and much-injured earth. The snow had been descending in thick close flakes all the previous day, and was now falling so fast, and lay so deep, as to make any unlucky night-walker sink heavy at every step he took: every now and then the cutting wind burst out with a long-drawn and melancholy wail. It was, in short, a night to fill the mind of any traveller with feelings of the utmost dismay and cheerlessness; a night of nights for making a man who has been driven from pillar to post all day, appreciate the luxury of a warm bed,—and Doctor Goodrich hoped that the summons might not be at his door, and buried his head in his soft pillow “deeper and deeper still,” to confirm, as it were by force, such a comfortable idea; until the peal became so peremptory and tremendous, that his wife, an eminently quiet woman, and moreover deaf of one ear, turned lazily round, and said, “But Doctor, Doctor Goodrich, I say;—do you know, I thought I heard a knock at the front door.”

Wearily the man of medicine compelled himself to arise, and, throwing on a garment or two, hastened to a front window, which he threw up. He thrust out his head:—Pah! how intensely cold it was!—“Who is there?—what do you want at this time of the night?” cried he, in a shivering voice once or twice, before the disturber of his peace was sufficiently diverted from his own noise to look up. Even then, the blinding snow, and the whistling wind prevented the Doctor from making any discovery beyond the first that there *was* some one standing upon the step, and the broken sentences,—“a case of life and death,” and “a carriage ready,” were all that reached his ear. These, however, were enough to make him descend and unbar the door with all possible speed—while his lady, whose curiosity was so much excited that she actually sat up in bed to listen, was scarcely aware that a word had been exchanged between her husband and the stranger, before the former hurried up stairs again and began to dress in great haste, careless of his wife’s again and again repeated—“But Doctor, —nay, but Doctor Goodrich,—why should you go out at this time of night? I shall be so lonely when you are gone!—and after all I should not wonder if to-morrow would not do as well. Don’t you remember the man who sent for you, no one knows how far; and after all, it was only his arm asleep—and I dare say, it is very cold out of doors. Nay, but Doctor,”—and with such snatches of expostulation as these she had fairly succeeded in lulling herself to sleep before her lord and master had clad himself in his bear-skin coat and shawl, called up

his apprentice to await his return, and rejoined the stranger, who was now pacing the lobby eagerly.

As before, Doctor Goodrich vainly attempted to snatch a view of his features; but to effect this was impossible, for he wore, according to the fashion of those days, a slouched riding hat, and a large scarlet India silk handkerchief tied round the lower part of his face.

"Are you ready?" said he impatiently, in the voice of a gentleman; but it was a voice of the most disagreeably authoritative tone.

"I am,—but shall I require any instruments—any—?"

"Nothing—nothing—come away. I have been too long already; but it snows so infernally."

"And which way—"

But the stranger cut the Doctor short most unceremoniously, by handing him into the carriage with an arm which was something of the strongest. The door was shut like lightning, and they set off at a furious speed, which did not tend to dissipate the bewilderment of the worthy physician. As soon, however, as his intellects became somewhat clearer, and he was fully aware that the adventure in which he was engaged was a somewhat extraordinary one, he raised his voice, so as to make sure of its being heard, "Which way are we going?" inquired he.

"No matter," was the reply of his mysterious companion.

"No matter, Sir!—this is the most unprecedented thing!—I will know every particular before I proceed a yard farther."

A short laugh at the impotence of this resolve broke out from the corner, as dark as midnight, in which the other was ensconced. The Doctor had never heard so unpleasant a laugh; and began to ponder all manner of unutterable things about highwaymen and treasonable persons,—for, in those days the deeds of Burke and Hare were undreamed of. He was very angry, and rather nervous; and let down the glass, if possible, to ascertain towards which quarter of town or country he was being whirled at such a rate. It was in vain to try to take an observation. They had passed the lamps of the town, but towards which quarter of the environs they were going, he had not the least idea.

"Put up the glass again!" cried the voice from the corner, in the same tone of command. The Doctor never thought of disputing it.

"Will you not at least tell me the name of my patient?—You have sought out the wrong person, if you have any matter in hand, which requires concealment."

"Now be still," replied the other imperiously. "You are

neither required to poison any one, nor yet to be present while any one is buried alive."

"Good Lord!" ejaculated the Doctor to himself;—"what shocking suggestions!"

"Nor am I so much in love with your talent, that I wish to kidnap and run away with you. You shall be set down again at your own door within an hour. You have only to perform your duty as a medical man, when you are called upon, and—hold out your hand—where? O—I have it now!—there is your fee before-hand."

The Doctor was certain that the purse thrust into his palm contained many coins; they might be only shillings, it was true, or more probably still, counterfeit money; but he could not help being re-assured by the touch thereof. They drove on. Presently the stranger gentleman let down the glass on his side of the carriage, and leaned out. The Doctor was sure that he heard a whistle, and thought a little more of highwaymen. In a few moments, the horses were suddenly checked,—the door flew open, and the incomprehensible conductor of this incomprehensible expedition, got out hastily. Doctor Goodrich prepared to follow him.

"No—no!" cried he, shutting the door forcibly—stay where you are for a minute or two."—The sound of his retreating steps was lost in an instant.

The physician was, however, by no means willing to sit still and take his chance. But his wrath prevented him from extricating himself immediately, and when he had opened the door, and sprung from the carriage, his companion was already lost in the darkness; and what was more strange and not less annoying, the driver of the vehicle was no longer visible.

This was alarming. The doctor then made the best use of his keen eyes, if possible to ascertain whither his evil stars had led him. The post-chaise appeared to have stopped at one side of a wide public road;—but neither tree, hedge, house, or any other object was to be seen which could decide the whereabouts of this stoppage. A second intense glance, however, showed him,—one light—a pair of lights, though the atmosphere was so loaded that he had not the least idea how far off or near to him they were. He was struggling towards them through the drift in the hope of coming to something like a comprehension of the real state of the case, when he met some one advancing towards him with a sudden and violent shock.

"Confound you, doctor, if that be you!" cried the voice of the unknown. "Make haste back to the carriage:—here is your patient. We must return to town with the least possible delay. Here, you fellow:—help him in before he faints again."

The light of an expiring carriage-lamp, held in one hand of the third of the group, did indeed show a drooping figure, supported by the stranger, and Doctor Goodrich supposed the person who had acted as Jehu on the occasion.

"Hold him up—gently—gently!" cried the deep voice:—"Is he fairly in?"

A groan from the inside of the vehicle answered the question.—"Now, doctor, we wait for you."

"Do you take me for a child?" replied the man of medicine, "to be thus pushed about at your bidding!—there has been some foul play here, and, until you tell me distinctly, what the meaning of all this is—I——"

"Come, come!" thundered the other, vehemently, drawing a sword, and pressing so hard upon the doctor, that the latter, who was a man of peace, and unprovided with a weapon, was obliged to give way. "I have no time for trifling;—there is no harm intended you,—but, if you resist, you see, I am a positive man, and can carry things through—ay, drive things through you, if I please. *Will* you get in?"

"He must be mad to a certainty! A pretty scrape is this for a man at my time of life!"

"Get in for a fool!—or you shall know the taste of cold steel—there—up you go like a man of sense. Keep fast hold of your fee." "Hollo on the box!—all right!" continued he rapidly folding up the steps, and closing the door. "Good night, doctor,—we will settle the rest of the account when we next meet."

Another shrill and scornful laugh,—another whistle louder than before—and he was gone. The chaise had wheeled round, and, as rapidly as before, was moving in a contrary direction.

The doctor was a cautious man, and, though not a coward, by no means a fire-eater in the point of courage. He may perhaps, be forgiven for feeling as much afraid as surprised on the present occasion: it was so sudden, so strange, so like a dream—and an odious dream it was! he would awaken from it without delay! in the mean time he would most carefully observe how and where he entered the town again, and for that purpose leaned steadily out of the window, till he was half frozen. He would detain the driver, and insist upon knowing.

But he was diverted from his maze of perplexed thoughts, by a low moaning of intense suffering; which reminded him that he was not alone in the carriage. This was no counterfeited cry—none knew better than himself the acute tones of bodily pain. It was impossible for him not to feel compassion for his neighbour, whoever he might be. "Who is there?" said he

softly, "and what ails you?—plague take this fellow, how he jolts us!—I'll make him give an account of himself!—How can I help you?"

No answer, save another moan.

"Cannot you speak? Why, what can be to be done? Lean against me, if you are faint. Whither would you wish to be taken!"

His companion made some attempt at words, but they were not intelligible, and just then, another plunge of the carriage extorted from him a louder cry.

"Is it a broken limb? or—thank Heaven, we are amongst the lamps again!—what am I to do with this poor creature?"

This indeed, was a question not very easily answered. The doctor was a humane man, and to abandon one in such a state of misery, although he had been so unceremoniously thrust upon his care, was totally out of the question; and even were he to take the wounded man (for such he supposed him to be) to any hospital or infirmary at such a time of night, it would subject himself to inquiries which it would be by no means easy to answer; the tale he had to tell, was so strange a one, that he could expect no one to believe it. *He* should not, he was sure,—and there were certain forms of admission, to be gone through. It might be, however, that his patient's destination was already determined upon, and if so—but he was cut short in this last train of thought, by his arriving again at his own door.

The driver, who, throughout all this strange night, had enacted the part of double to the principal character with much activity, and was as much shawled and slouched over as his master, was off the box in an instant, and rung such a peal upon the bell, as awakened Mrs. Goodrich to the perception "of the fancy that she could hear something tinkle." No sooner had the pale-faced apprentice presented himself at the door, holding a candle in the left hand, and rubbing his milky greenish eyes with his right, than the Jehu opened the chaise door, let down the steps with alacrity, and putting his arms round the helpless occupant of the corner, lifted him firmly out;—though a scream told that this was not accomplished without giving him violent pain. The doctor jumped out after him, manfully resolving to satisfy his curiosity at once. "Hold him up on the other side, Sir," said the man, "he is sadly mauled—there, Sir, your arm over the doctor's shoulder—hold fast, and now, that I can be of no more use —"

"Stop! stop!" roared the doctor, who was now entirely encumbered by his helpless burden.

But the quick-witted fellow knew better than to obey any



such command, and before Doctor Goodrich could ascertain so much as whether the vehicle which had conveyed him, was chocolate, green, or yellow in colour—or could reiterate his cry, the man had shut the door, gathered up his reins, the chaise had rattled away, and left the physician in a state of consternation, such as may be conceived, with a wounded and bleeding man clinging about his neck, and his apprentice's aghast face in the door-way, to assure him, that he had not, in a fit of somnambulism, walked down stairs, to taste the sweets of a November night—for the snow, though abating, had by no means ceased from falling.

"Hold the light, Jem," cried he, in his worst humour. "This is a fine business! shut the door, and go, unlock my study—he shall go in there, to-night, and the first thing in the morning I will have him off to the infirmary, whoever he be—was there ever such a trick played before!" and thus grumbling, while he walked carefully, he succeeded in bearing the wounded man into his *sanctum sanctorum*, and laying him down on the sofa, with a groan of relief on the one part, and of agony on the other, "Light the lamp, Jem, quick!—let us see what we have got here."

It was with no small curiosity, indeed, that the Doctor took advantage of the light, to survey the individual so strangely thrown upon his mercy. A glance showed him a good deal. His patient was very young, though tall of his age; his face was now sallow and pale with the excess of pain; but in spite of its distortion of feature and unearthly complexion, was a handsome one—the face of no vulgar man. His dress was also in every respect gentlemanly—round his waist was a sword belt, from which both weapon and scabbard had been rent with violence, and when the huge Spanish cloak in which he was enveloped was removed, his waistcoat and shirt were discovered to be saturated with clotted blood. It required no minute inspection to discover whence this had flowed. The wound was a very serious one. It had been inflicted by a sword, which had entered at the breast with a forcible thrust—the Doctor shuddered, as he remembered the strong grasp of his companion in the night-ride. The linen of the wounded man was exquisitely fine: one or two costly rings were upon his fingers, and from the breast-pocket of his coat, fell a large pocket-book, apparently very well filled. He *must* have friends who could richly recompense any care taken towards him,—he could not be a person of no consequence;—and then again, while he was busy in examining the wound, and bandaging it with a dexterous hand, the Doctor bethought him of the heavy purse which remained yet unexamined in his own pocket. What was best to be

done?—the result of all these *pros*, was, that the apprentice was sent up stairs to arouse a servant, that she was ordered to prepare the best chamber for the invalid's use; and that before Mrs. Goodrich had opened her eyes to the things of the world, on the next morning, her regular household had been utterly deranged by the addition of one to its number, who was likely to prove a serious charge, if he lived; and who had already become so delirious with pain and fever, as to be unable, even if he had been willing, to throw any light upon the transactions of the night.

It was difficult to make the worthy lady, who was a woman of slow wits, enter into Doctor Goodrich's arrangement and calculations. "But, dear me, Doctor, I say—after all, you have never told me who he is; and it is so very strange!—and how you came by him."

"My love," replied her husband, speaking steadily in her one available ear, "there is no occasion to tease you with what you could not understand; we must do what is best under the circumstances, and take care of this poor young man as well as we can. One thing more, Penelope, you will please to make as little unnecessary talk about the matter as you can help. He may possibly be gone again, before any one hears of it, and nothing need be said—"

"And, dear me, Doctor Goodrich, where will he go?" was the inquiry of his helpmate.

"Breakfast is ready, my love," was her husband's judicious reply.

His wife, for so weak a woman, was obedient and conscientious in no ordinary degree, and he knew that she would observe his request, of not talking about this unlooked for accession to their family; and once having reconciled her economical notions to a fire in the yellow room, and the spreading of her best Marseilles quilt upon the bed,—the great difficulty was got over, and she was ready to acquiesce in every other point. He doubted not but that in the course of the day, something would recur, which should decide the future steps he should take. But what if the stranger should die of his fearful illness?—The Doctor had, somehow or other, unusual confidence in his skill upon this occasion, and was resolved he *should not* die! Twice or three times in the course of his morning rounds, he returned home, to find his patient neither better nor worse, and the same negative answer to his inquiries if any one had been there. When, however, the labours of the day were done, and he returned to an early tea table, (for in those days late dinners were not,) he perceived that his wife was struggling with some important news.

"What is the matter?—has anybody—"

"No, nobody—Doctor Goodrich—and Mr. Temple is no better."

"Mr. Temple? Who told you his name, Penelope?"

"Why, my dear, I did what it seems you never thought of doing:—I looked into his pocket-book, because of his friends."

"Because of his friends—"

"Yes," replied his luminous wife, much contented with her own sagacity—"because there might be some one to be written to—who so proper as his own relations?—and in the pockets of all his clothes, and I could find nothing but a lot of bank-notes, and a card, here it is—Walter Temple—a very genteel name, Doctor Goodrich, is it not?—and I have locked up the pocket-book in the blue linen press. Your tea is growing cold, Doctor."

The Doctor drunk his tea, and mused. Temple—Walter Temple,—it is a good name, and he should, doubtless, be receiving some inquiries from the principals of the family. But, on the whole, it was a most unaccountable circumstance; and the more he thought upon it, the less able was he to imagine any explanation—the best thing, after all, perhaps, was to wait for a day or two.

The day or two passed over—another week, and Mr. Temple lingered much in the same state, and unclaimed by any letter or message of inquiry. Day by day the Doctor haunted the news rooms, to look for: *If W. T. will return to his disconsolate friends,—or, Any person having met with a tall young man, etc. etc. etc. is requested to forward such tidings without delay to his anxious family. Address ———.* But no such significant paragraphs made their appearance. By this time, as much of the tale as was at the mercy of the servants, had gone abroad, and neighbours were busily occupied in canvassing and censuring Doctor Goodrich's conduct. So extremely imprudent as it was!—a nobleman's nephew indeed! (this was the rank which rumour had chosen to fix upon the stranger), they should like to know *what* nobleman's nephew!—Mrs. Goodrich's easy temper amounted to an absolute fault! Some, on the other hand, admired at the shrewdness of the physician and his lady. "Think of the connexion!" said a certain Mrs. Lesage, a widow lady, of a certain age, genteel family, faded beauty, and narrow income—one endowed with an unslumbering spirit of intrigue, and an unbounded store of pedigree recollections—who knew the Russell nose, and Howard lip, and the Talbot eyebrow, and the Stanley chin—and endeavoured to make it appear, that her residence in an upstart commercial town, was an amazing condescension. "Think of the connex-

ion?" Mrs. Lesage would say, "if they had only any daughters to be married! or a son to put forward in life—Isabella—we will go and spend a long afternoon with Mrs. Goodrich."

Isabella was a girl with a short figure, and a singularly delicate complexion, though it was dark almost to the Creole tint. Her features were large and not very regular—her smile very pensive. She was, in every respect, the opposite of her aunt: her disposition was grave, resolute, and somewhat melancholy—she had neither capacity nor comprehension to enter into the thousand daily manœuvres of all sorts and sizes, in which that lady would have enlisted her assistance: and though only seventeen had gained as much reverence as love from her relation. She was remarkable in not seeming to feel the want of friends or companions—and though by no means of a close or concealing nature, gave her confidence to few. On the present occasion, she would have gladly excused herself from appearing uninvited at Mrs. Goodrich's tea-table; but her aunt would hear of no refusal. The two, therefore, went, and were received with a sufficient share of indolent graciousness by the Doctor's lady, who liked the company of visitors who spared her the trouble and anxiety of putting on her best cap, and using her best china—and one of whom "was such a remarkably pleasant woman, and knew everything about everybody." Her husband, however, had been too often subjected to Mrs. Lesage's subtle and pertinacious curiosity to receive her with any pleasure. No sooner did he make his appearance than she beset him with an eager—

"O Doctor! so you do not think Mr. Temple much better, Mrs. Goodrich tells me?"

"He is, at all events, not worse," replied her host.

"Such unbounded confidence as his relations must repose in your skill!" thought, to be sure, there is nothing remarkable in that—not one of them have been over yet! it must be very gratifying to you."

The Doctor swallowed the compliment, though he laughed in his sleeve at its absurdity.

"I shall be delighted to hear of his convalescence," continued the widow; "you do not exactly know to which branch of the Shaftesbury family he belongs, Mrs. Goodrich tells me. Let me see, there was an Honourable Miss Temple, some forty years ago, who married one of the Levisons—the Levisons and the Lesages were closely connected by several intermarriages—so that, in that case, if he be one of the family, I may claim cousinship with him."

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Goodrich, opening her large pale eyes to their widest.

"The Levisons were always an odd family—but, however—and they tell me he is so handsome, Dr. Goodrich—you must let me see him as soon as ever he is better. When I look round me at the population of this place, and remember what society I have been accustomed to, I wonder sometimes why I am to be found living on, or rather vegetating here—and then again, custom, you see, Doctor!—custom works all the miracles which are wrought now-a-days."

The Doctor did his best to look aware of the honour conferred upon the town.

"Excepting yourselves, I have not a neighbour on whom I can rely—not a soul who understands me; should I be able to be of any use, as nurse, or reader, when Mr. Temple is able to bear being read to, either I or Isabel shall be only too happy to render any assistance in our power."

"I am a very bad nurse," observed Isabel, drily, well knowing that when one of these offers of joint service was made, she was the only person from whom performance was expected.

"Time you should learn, my love;—a poor man's wife, and you must anticipate a no more splendid lot, ought to be a proficient in the art of nursing. Poor Lesage used to wonder where in the world I had acquired my experience,"—and she squeezed out a tear, as she spoke, to the memory of her dear departed, and his gout—the neglect of which, rumour said, had shortened his days.

The doctor escaped from this harrangue, as soon as he could, and took refuge at his patient's bed-side. He remained there till the cries of—"But shall I not see Doctor Goodrich again, to bid him good-night?" had ceased to resound through the house, without producing the intended offer of an escort. When he came down stairs again, his wife was sitting with her forehead resting upon her hand.

"But Doctor Goodrich, I say," she observed, "Mrs. Lesage is an uncommonly pleasant woman,—and my head aches,—I am going to bed immediately."

Long and tedious was Temple's restoration to health; and so imperceptibly did it proceed, that his petitioning for a book one day, seemed only a shade further amendment than had appeared on the preceding week. Mrs. Goodrich, to whom, the Doctor being abroad, the petition was preferred by the nurse, "was much put about to know what she must send him." Her selection was a curious one—consisting of the Bible, a novel by one of the milk-and-water tale-tellers of the day, an odd volume of Pope, and the offer of as many years of the Gentleman's Magazine as Mr. Temple liked. The nurse brought back this choice cargo of literature, without much delay,

and with many thanks. "The gentleman would keep the Bible, and she hoped he would read it for his good ;—he was coming round, to a certainty, for he had taken notice of the faded breadth in the window curtain, and did not seem to understand where he was, when she told him."

"Dear me," said Mrs. Goodrich, "I wonder what the Doctor will say when he comes home !"

The Doctor, as it may be supposed, was highly pleased to receive such convincing proof of his patient's amendment. Within a week from that time, he was listening to a part of Temple's story from his own lips—a strange story, it might be judged to be, from the excited expression which his countenance wore as he left the sick chamber ;—but, whatever it might be, he kept it religiously to himself, withstanding with the utmost coolness his wife's—"But, Doctor Goodrich, I say," and the daily sieges laid to his secret by Mrs. Lesage, who every morning brought a fresh battalion of rumours which she had collected in the neighbourhood (some of which the physician surmised, might be of home manufacture)—"which it would be so agreeable, and *might* save so much mischief to be permitted to contradict from authority."

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## PART II.

### SPECULATIONS.

MR. TEMPLE seemed to promise to become an acquisition to our town, by offering some of its inhabitants an inexhaustible subject of conjecture and conversation. Thanks to the skill of Doctor Goodrich, he was at last seen walking to and fro wrapt up in a large cloak, "*So gracefully put on !*" said Mrs. Lesage, "no *parvenu* ever knew how to put on a cloak ;"—and at church, of which he was a somewhat punctilious attender. Much was expected of him, or for him ; some determined in their own minds, that he should disappear in a coach and four, being taken by a venerable and awful looking old gentleman with a powdered head—some concluded that he should endow Mrs. Goodrich's sideboard with nothing less than a service of plate, and calculated how much he would leave for the charities : others, of humbler expectations, would be contented if he would "tell them all about it," before he went away. None of these things came to pass—the first report being that Mr. Temple was

eyes, which she fancied must have looked unutterably significant things. How odd!—how tiresome!

What would she not have given to have partaken of a scene with which Doctor Goodrich's kind stars indulged him, a few evenings after this incomprehensible chess-playing! Had it been summer, something might have been seen; for by an extraordinary coincidence, she now chanced to live opposite to his lodgings—but alas!—it was a fine frosty December night, when caudles were lighted, and curtains drawn as early as five o'clock:—and, at the moment when the physician knocked at his patient's door, simply to request the return of a book, she was deeply immersed in the vicissitudes of a pool, two streets off! How capriciously does Fortune bestow her blessings!

The doctor ascended the stairs without being troubled by any presentiments or misgivings. He had hardly reached the first landing, however, when he was aware that some one was talking very loud in Walter's room;—and at the moment while he was considering whether he should mount higher or not, the door of the apartment was flung open, and the young man's voice was heard in its loudest tone.

"I tell you, no, Sir!—No circumstances, no considerations shall induce me to alter my plans. Please to consider this as our last interview."

"But Temple—but dear Walter,"—replied another low and insinuating voice:—"take time,—only consider what I have said to you."

"I will hear no more!—my mind is made up. Here I shall remain!"

"Then take the consequences!" was the reply of the other voice, provoked out of its assumed gentleness:—"and remember"——

"I have no business here," said the Doctor to himself; honourably and hastily turning away, lest he should unwittingly hear what he ought not. The temptation to remain was great; for he recognised the voice,—he had heard the step before!—How capriciously does Fortune throw away her blessings!

Perhaps the prevailing feeling of Doctor Goodrich's mind at that moment, was one of satisfaction:—the few words which he had heard so entirely corroborated Temple's own tale. It was impossible not to be curious to know *who* the actor in the night scene, and the tempter, and threatener might be, and not to hope that Time which had already revealed so much would complete its work by throwing light on this dark point also.

The interview was over; and Walter left alone, to remember the last withering words of his tormenter, and to think over

thousand temptations which he had withstood. So violently been his passions excited, that the countenance of his fear-guest seemed to haunt him in a thousand mocking forms, long as the original had departed, and wherever he turned, he saw that flashing eye, that dilated nostril, that lip curled in a sneer as might have been worn by the Evil One himself! He had been privy to much of guilt before; but this interview had displayed to him such a deliberate purpose of wickedness, as he could not have believed to exist in any man's breast:—and this startled him the more, from the change which his own nature had undergone during his long and wasting sickness. It had required no small steadiness of mind to carry his new resolutions into effect; to remain content to a tedious and uninviting occupation, when his education from his youth upwards, had been among such entirely different scenes, and it had been no light task to school his own spirit, while he concealed its former bent. It was not wonderful, therefore, that over such a conflict he had found it necessary to cast a mask of common-place manners and habits:—a mask, which he had only partially raised to his friend the Doctor, who was not of a calibre of mind either to understand the full extent of his trials, or advise with him in the difficulties to which they would expose him.

Something, however of his old impetuous nature had been kindled by the recent encounter. But it was necessary to smooth his brow, after a sleepless night spent in tempestuous meditations, and to appear at the desk at the usual time, and with his usual composure. In spite of all his self-command, his hand would tremble as he pointed his pen;—and, in the broad sunlight which fell upon his face, one of his fellow clerks, a mischievous busy-body of a fellow, remarked that his lip was unusually livid. He touched the elbow of the young man who sat next to him, saying, in an audible whisper, "Notice Temple,—and remind me to tell you something when we are alone."

There was nothing absolutely to resent in this, but such scrutiny was new, and disagreeable. Presently Temple heard Mr. Merryweather whispering at a great rate to his neighbour; and his own name and that of Doctor Goodrich repeated more times than a few. At length this chattering close to him became so annoying, that he raised his head slowly, and turning round towards the scandal-monger and his recipient, said gravely: "You are using my name a little too often, I think; it is not civil."

"The old story," replied Merryweather sarcastically: "You know what listeners' fare is?"



"And you have heard, I suppose," replied Temple, for one moment losing his patience, "what wages idle talkers sometimes receive."

"There—there!" cried his antagonist spitefully; who, though a coward, had not learned manhood's first lesson, how to control his tongue. "Sir, I beg to assure you that I am not in the least afraid of you."

"You have owned yourself to be an idle talker, and I am content," was Temple's quiet answer, as he resumed his writing.

"Bravo! Solomon's Temple!" cried another good hand in hatching quarrels; "and you, Master Merry, I think must have forgotten your famous rencontre with Price, when you set off together, arm in arm, you know, with a bag of bullets between you, and neither of you was anxious to look into the pistol, far less to load it; so that you were glad to shake hands out of sheer fright, and trudge back again, arm in arm."

"Or perhaps," took up Mr. Oldham, a solemn mercantile wit, "Mr. Merryweather thinks he may be losing interest of money on the said bag of bullets; and is anxious to turn them to account."

The rebuked gossip, at the first mention of this duel, which was no exaggeration of the fact, sneaked back to his desk, and the entrance of Mr. Arnold put an end to all this strife of tongues. Nevertheless, Temple could not but be aware that, all that day, he was an object of unusual remark. Even Mr. Arnold himself, the pompous and the silent, who rarely condescended to speak to any of his subalterns except on business, when he handed Temple a note of invitation to a Christmas party of his wife's, seemed to eye him with a certain solicitude, and even inquired whether he was as well as usual.

Walter could not but be struck by finding that his presence had the same effect on his companions for many ensuing days. As often as he was on the point of asking the meaning of this unusual observation on their part, he checked himself with, "It is, perhaps, only a fancy, and may end as it has begun, if I take no notice of it."

Mrs. Arnold, the merchant's lady, was one of those characters which abound in every commercial town:—a woman who, totally devoid of any experience or education in the refinements of high life, was perseveringly determined to be as much more than genteel as she possibly could be: and maintained this ultra character by the most profuse expenditure of money, by an affectation of the most profound ignorance as to its value, and by tightly reining in her nature, which was frank and jovial, within a thousand trammels and ordinances, which only sit

gracefully, upon those who have been born to such harness, and only draw ridicule upon the uninitiated when they attempt to assume them. She rarely laughed; spoke in a slow and silky voice; dressed very richly, and with as good a taste as milliners could supply;—and though the ball was to be the most magnificent ever given in our good town, she was so far above the vulgar necessity of taking any thought about it, having sent for decorators, cooks, and a band of music from the metropolis, that she had leisure to spend the four first days of the week in which it was to take place, in the task of training two very young twin sisters of hers, fresh from the country, who were to come out on the occasion.

It was a happy thing for the Miss Roystons that they had stout spirits of their own, and no mean opinion of their graces, otherwise they must have been utterly subdued by the unceasing lectures delivered by their courtly sister. However, the evening came at last, and they dressed and descended to the drawing-room, in the silent resolution to cast care and all good counsel behind them, and enjoy themselves as much as they pleased.

The scene was a brilliant one. The London artists had done their work well, and transformed Mr. Arnold's good family house into a perfect palace of enchantment. There were exotics in flower without number, and coloured lamps and transparencies, and passages fitted up with the softest of ottomans, and music, to the like of which provincial feet had never danced before. A passing regiment had enabled the lady of the fête to sow her rooms thickly with scarlet coats and glittering epaulettes;—everything was complete—no failures,—no disappointments,—no belles detained at home by colds,—no great guests who played capricious,—not an officer called away on duty at the eleventh hour,—and to crown the whole, the Roystons contrived to escape from the *surveillance* of their awful sister, and were soon involved in *not* the quietest of all flirtations, in a temporary bower of orange trees and laurel boughs, for in those days camellias and chrysanthemums were not.

Temple wandered hither and thither, with the uneasy feelings of one who looks upon a spectacle in which every one save himself is engaged. It did not consist with his plans to cultivate a large acquaintance, any more than altogether to abstain from society,—and he had already discovered, now that the romance of his being nobly connected, seemed to be forgotten by most except by Mrs. Lesage, that a young and poor man, however sociably disposed, meets with but little encouragement in a place where money is counted, rather than acquirements considered as the passport to good society. There was Isabella

Lesage, disengaged, it is true;—in fact, she was never much in request; but to ask *her* to dance had never once crossed his mind. His only partner had been anything but a comfort to him. She had looked terrified when Mr. Arnold had presented him to her. She had turned pale when they stood up to dance. She had trembled as often as the figure required him to take her hand, and when the set was over, had hastened back to a stupid, deaf chaperon, in a hurry such as was anything but flattering to her partner. Moreover, he fancied that the strange and curious glances which had so much fretted him for the last many days, had followed him hither also, and he was not the less irritated from feeling on this, as on every other occasion, that he stood alone in the midst of the crowd.

In addition to the suite of supper-rooms above stairs, the contrivers of the fête had placed a table on a landing-place outside the folding-doors of the principal apartments. A long passage opened from this little platform,—a lamp placed behind a transparent blind at the end of this, and a red curtain festooned over its entrance, gave to it a most successful effect of dimness and extent. It was a pleasant contrast to turn from the brilliantly illuminated staircase and rooms within, and look down that retired avenue. Cicely Royston had been walking there with her partner, and declared that she found it most delightfully cool.

At this table were assembled Mrs. Lesage and her niece,—the above-mentioned Cicely, and a few others. The widow preferred such a situation to the more formal magnificence of the rooms within. "It had such an easy foreign look!—and she hated a crowd so. Besides she was positive that no one could do the honours more gracefully or so quietly as Captain Templeton. She was quite in her element among military men. Her dear Lesage." . . She was interrupted by a challenge to take wine.

"Delightful! most delightful!" resumed she: "quite a little picture that passage! There should be a shrine at the end, with a lady robed in white on her knees before a crucifix, to make the illusion complete."

"Or a lady, Miss Royston," said Captain Templeton, a good-humoured middle-aged man. "A lady, with a cavalier on his knees, before her,—would not that do as well?"

"O dear, how pretty!"

"Suppose," suggested another young lady, "that you show us the effect, Miss Royston,—it would be so kind."

Cicely had not the least objection in the world; but her partner was a heavy-headed young man, much afraid of being

d at; who seemed to have no notion of enacting the  
te figure, which the *tableau* would require.

ar me, Mr. Poynter," said Cicely, simply "and you  
neel so well, I am sure, if you would only try."

am too old, and too fat," said Captain Templeton, "or I  
offer my services. I remember, once, when I was a  
man at Levison Court—"

vison Court!" exclaimed Mrs. Lesage eagerly, to whose  
that name was as a spark dropped upon straw. "Old  
t! Captain Templeton! how can you say such things of  
lf? You knew the Levisons of Levison Court, then—"  
timately—I presume that you too were acquainted with

lated to them, Captain Templeton," replied she, drawing  
long lean neck to its longest. "Ah—Mr. Temple! still  
ring about like a disembodied spirit? we are very com-  
e here."

Mr. Temple. . . ." said Isabella, "there is a seat besid-

. Lesage and Walter were equally amazed by this <sup>at its</sup>  
iece of civility, which the latter, however, was g<sup>stant,</sup>  
; and he was presently busied in an examination <sup>figure</sup>  
y Christmas pie, which reared its bulwarks before him. <sup>ne</sup>  
ot very nearly related, I suppose," said Captain Temple-  
for I see you do not wear mourning for the Colonel—you  
t but have heard of his death."

h! he belongs to another branch of the family. Dead!  
when did it happen?—Tell me all about it, how his poor  
or will feel it!"

ou forget," replied the Captain archly, "that she too has  
lead for the last ten years."

o I do—but my memory, is worth nothing new! why  
we grow old?—Well, Captain, and when did the lament-  
event occur, and when? . . . don't you see Mr. Temple is  
ing for the story as well as I—pray tell me all about it!"  
mple had indeed suspended his operations, and fixed his  
on the military man, with an intense and eager gaze; as  
however, as he was recalled to himself by Mrs. Lesage's  
tinent appeal, he bent over his plate more than before.  
o odd—Miss Royston," whispered the widow to her  
bour; "don't you notice it now?—poor fellow! poor  
v!—Isabel, don't you frown so, child, or you will have a  
de across your forehead before you are one and twenty."  
Why, you can hardly call Colonel Levison's death a lament-  
event," resumed Captain Templeton, who was one of the  
antial folks, that never let a story go; "I should think

that his death must be a blessing to every one. I dare say, Miss Royston, you have heard enough of his doings in your neighbourhood."

"That I have," replied Cicely briskly—"Mamma always made us put down our veils if she saw him a mile off, on his great black horse."

"I suppose, that no one was a greater scourge in his own county than he. Even before I ceased to know him, his conduct was notorious enough; and I fancy after his respectable acquaintance ceased to countenance him, that it became yet worse and wilder."

"What a prosy man," whispered Mrs. Lesage to her niece, —so accustomed to talk of the Levisons herself, that she regarded any one else approaching the subject, in the light of a poacher upon her own pet manor.

"I had only yestertay a letter from Dundee, with the news," continued the persevering *raconteur*; "there was something most awful in the manner of his death. Only a week before, overad been standing at the door of his hotel, when a hearse and eslowly past (you have no doubt heard, Miss Royston, of liantlyiting a party of farmers to dinner, making them all drunk, that ending them home in a hearse, after having drawn out the much pins from the wheels,—and how he walked by the road side to watch it overset.) Well, he called out to the driver of the hearse—'Hollo there! you carcass carrier! come back this day week, and I shall have a job for you!' The man touched his hat and promised to be punctual, and drove off. It was that very day week, at the mess dinner, that Lieutenant Marshall, who sat next to him, saw his face suddenly turn very black; he fell back in his chair like a log. He was so used to his tricks, that he cried out at once, 'Levison's shamming!' and a sham they all thought it,—and in their horse play, took and dragged him by his stock, to the door. He made no resistance, and they began to think it was very strange;—when they looked again, his face was yet blacker, than it had been before. They called in a doctor—but he was already dead,—and what makes it more remarkable is, that in the midst of all the confusion, arrived the undertaker, for the gentleman's direction. Was it not an extraordinary coincidence?"

"Most extraordinary!" echoed the widow mechanically, her eyes and thoughts being occupied with other matters than Captain Templeton or his story; she was watching one, upon whom the recital seemed to have made a very extraordinary impression. Walter, it is true, had not lifted up his head since her last remark, but she was too well versed in observing for her own ends, not to be aware of the suppressed agitation which

was working in every feature of his face—and which she ascribed to the influence of the narrative. His colour came and went, his lips were alternately compressed and expanded—his eye (she could only see one) flashed as certain jewels do in the dark, and his hand was trembling violently. Miss Royston called off her attention for one moment—when she turned her head again, he was gone!

The news, thus carelessly told, had, indeed, been of the utmost moment to him. That Colonel Levison was cut short in his career of wickedness, and removed from the possibility of tempting him further, was so new, so amazing a relief, that it was not wonderful if he should be much excited by such unhoped for tidings. He felt as if he should never be able to draw another calm breath, as if, when he walked, he must totter like a drunken man; and commanded himself, with the intention of keeping his seat. He was aware that the keen eyes of Mrs. Lesage were watching him, and turned his head away. His gaze fell upon the long decorated passage I have mentioned, which now looked all the gloomier, that the lamp at its extremity was slowly and fitfully expiring. At that instant, he thought—he was certain that he saw a shadowy figure moving in the far distance—now, as if it were clinging to one wall, then to the other, and again standing more distinctly out. Less keen eyes would not have been able to separate its outline from the shadows which surrounded it, but *his* recognised the mien of pride—the arm outstretched, and pointed, (he *felt* towards himself,) in an attitude of defiance—the haughtily erect neck. He gazed more intently,—it must have been a phantom, called up by fancy—there was nothing!—yet he could not be satisfied without endeavouring to ascertain the reality or falsity of the appearance he imagined himself to have seen, and, for that purpose, left the table abruptly.

“Upon my word! and so Mr. Temple is gone! why, he was here a minute ago, eating his supper; was he not, Isabella?”

“Did you miss his exit?” said a young lady, “O Mrs. Lesage! *such* a loss!—he vanished down the corridor with the speed and silence of a harlequin; never was anything better done!—I declare it was enough to console one for the loss of a lady and the knight.”

“He’s a very nice young man,” said Cicely Royston stoutly, “dances charmingly—thank you, Mr. Poynter, I will take the more trifle.”

“He’s very odd,” remarked Mrs. Lesage, shaking her head seriously, “and that accounts for everything. *Now* I can understand what is the meaning of this close connexion with Doctor Goodrich.”

"I can bear witness to the good supper he eat," said Captain Templeton, "if you mean the young gentleman who was sitting by that young lady."

"Ah, that's nothing—nothing—people in his situation eat ravenously."

"He keeps the books," observed Mr. Oldham drily, "I never heard that a large appetite belonged to double entry."

"Sir!" replied Mrs. Lesage scornfully, and then, suddenly recollecting herself, turned away in contempt with, "I don't know the man:—I believe what I have stated, Captain Templeton, is no uncommon case with deranged persons. Yes, poor fellow, he has been under Doctor Goodrich's care to a certainty, and a better place could not have been found for him.—You know his wife takes no notice of anybody, or anything—and, I do believe, if the house was full of crazy people, would never find it out."

"Nay but, aunt," said Isabella warmly—breaking a long and displeased silence, "surely you are going a little too far upon conjecture. Only consider, what injury you may be doing to Mr. Temple's prospects—if such a report be spread and believed. For my own part, I cannot but think that you are entirely mistaken, and that Mr. Temple is as sound of mind, as you or I am; and I cannot think it either kind or right, because there is some mystery about him, to interpret it in a manner which may do irretrievable mischief. Come, Miss Royston, we have been here long enough—let us go down stairs again."

When Isabella did speak, as Mrs. Lesage once said, "she spoke with a vengeance;" and it was remarkable that the only effectual checks to that lady's loquacity, were such expressions of strong disapprobation on the part of her niece. She shook her head peevishly when the latter disappeared, but ventured no further scandal that night. "So—so," said she to herself, "I see how it is after all; I must take some steps without delay."

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## PART III.

### FURTHER NOVELTIES.

THE tidings of Colonel Levison's death were confirmed by every subsequent rumour, and the fact of his remains being laid in the consecrated ground belonging to the chapel at Levison

Court; and Temple felt himself at the same moment, free and alone in the world. But the sense of liberty, the consciousness (which no succession of days could wholly deprive of its ecstasy) that his own path now lay before him, unencumbered by any such hinderances as had lately threatened to beset [it, overbalanced the solitariness of the feeling, that there was no one, positively no one among the whole mass of mankind, to take that peculiar interest in his weal or love, which makes a home for the heart some where. This disenthralment gave a spring to his spirits, and an energy to his exertions, which surprised those most who had observed him the closest:—nay, the grave and reserved expression of his countenance was exchanged for an open and manly smile of hope and cheerfulness, in itself sufficient to contradict the rumour which had crept into Mrs. Lesage's ear, and from her mouth over all the town, that he had been partially insane, and was liable at any moment to a return of the malady. Fortune seemed disposed not to look unkindly upon him. One or two speculations in which he embarked turned out so well, that he was induced to extend his ventures—and these too, were successful. He was, ere long, spoken of as a rising young man—and, by a mixture of courtesy and independence of manner secured not a few friends, as far as good words and good offices went:—if there was anything beyond these which he wanted, he repressed such longings as visionary, and, when he remembered the past, was only too thankful for the comparative smoothness of his lot.—But we must proceed to a point of time, within three years of Mrs. Arnold's party, and four from the November night, when the merchant by chance had been thrown into the protection of Doctor Goodrich.

It was a bright, balmy, intense summer evening, when a trusty serving-man deposited Isabella Lesage at the door of a manor-house far in the country, which was occupied by the Roystons. Two years had done much for her,—had given height to her figure, and softness to her manners—she could never be changed into beautiful—but Time had refined the expression of her features, and imparted to it an intelligence and a softness which made her attractive to those who seek for spirit rather than seeming. She had learnt to know her own heart, and to become friends with Walter Temple—or, to speak more correctly, they now understood each other perfectly; he had discovered that she was not altogether precise and abrupt, though as far as ever from fulfilling the requisitions of his fancy: she had found out that he possessed taste and intelligence—and both of them fully comprehended Mrs. Lesage's tactics, and



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disregarded them with all the independence of nineteen and four and twenty.

She, good lady, was anything but satisfied. Her confidence in Temple had been utterly shaken, since she had been made acquainted with the distressing fact, that, in the case of his name, Temple had no part or lot either in Shaftesbury or Levi-son. His acquaintance with her niece gave rise to reports which were very injurious to Isabella's prospects—as others were thereby prevented from attempting to possess ground, which rumour had declared to be pre-engaged—and, though she was inwardly relieved, by perceiving that there seemed no disposition on the part of either to sue or to be sued,—she would have had more : a complete cessation of intercourse. Yet how to manage this, baffled her powers of contriving. Both were so fancy-free, as to be indifferent how seldom they met, and yet testified great and public pleasure whenever they did meet; and in spite of the widow's innuendoes and lectures about boldness, flirting, not caring for what the world said, and the like, —Isabella would talk to Temple, dance with him when he asked her, in the perfect confidence of her own uprightness; and rejected one or two other suitors, for the sole stupid reason, that “she did not like them,” and not because she had set her affections upon another. On his part, he had, from the first moment of their acquaintance, appreciated in her a generosity of nature superior to any vulgar curiosity, and, of later days, discovered that the *brusquerie* which accompanied this, did not arise from temper so much, as inexperience in the ways by which courtesy may be united to sincerity.

But the widow, though much discomposed, was not overcome in purpose. She had already contrived manœuvres and subterfuges enough to have made any two young people awkward and suspicious in each other's company, save a pair so singularly straightforward as Walter and Isabella,—and her grand scheme now, was to send the latter to pass the autumn with the Roystons, and to take her to winter in Bath. “Surely,” thought she, “something might be done there; the girl is not inelegant :—I have managed worse matters—but why will she speak out so, I wonder? she frightens all the men away!”

The idea of this country visit was delightful to Isabella, who was a keen lover of nature, and had longed for nothing so much for months past, as to fall asleep to the rustling of leaves, and be wakened by other sounds than the chime of a certain clock, which she believed, was the brassiest chime in the whole world. The Royston's were as kind as kind could be. They had been despatched home in disgrace : Mrs. Arnold could do nothing

for them,—but they retained such a delightful remembrance of town gaieties and town beaux, that they could not comprehend how their guest should enjoy such a tame out-of-doors life as the one they led, and were grateful to her accordingly for coming and varying the quietness (they called it the dulness) of their own home.

Besides the two young ladies and their mother, was their grandfather, who, on the death of his son, had consented to fill his vacant place, and had now passed, by many years, the allotted threescore and ten of man's life. He was a perfect picture of innocent old age, with a placid child-like face of eager curiosity and content, a figure that seemed to bend beneath the load of his long gray hair; and, though his faculties were impaired by his many years, he was not utterly unconscious, from moment to moment, of the things which were passing around him, and every now and then would give utterance to some significant words, which surprised by their appositeness, though this might merely be the coincidence of some remembered thought or maxim of other days, with the circumstances of the present. It was a pure and holy pleasure to sit by his side, and think how calmly he was carried forwards towards his everlasting rest, after a long life of active thought and labour.

And Dale Hall, would, in itself, have been a pleasant place to visit, had Mrs. Royston been more passive, and her daughters less lively than they were. It was a large house—and both building and grounds were in that state, when maturity begins to merge in decay, yet ere the latter has so far gained the ascendancy, as to become dismally obvious. The once white walls were painted with weather-stains, the red-tiled roof with lichens of every colour. The shrubberies had, in many places, become tangled wildernesses of bloom, and garden flowers grown wild sprung up at their will upon the lawn; and in those walks which were least trodden. Within, matters were in much the same state:—some chambers were shut up, because the roof let in the rain;—but the rest were so screened and curtained, and cushioned, and carpetted, with furniture so far past its prime that you could use it without remorse, as to be paradises of comfort. There was an old chapel room:—a hall paved with marble, where a billiard-table had been, and an enormous white rose tree, which had climbed up among the boughs of a magnificent larch, and looked in at Isabella's chamber window with a late flower or two, as if to show good will towards its occupant. Dear, pleasant Dale Hall!—with the harvest going on in the fields round about, and the sun setting every night over a serene and fertile champaign landscape,—

it was enough to tempt any one to forget the flaunting town, with an *actively interested* aunt, (so she styled herself) and Walter Temple into the bargain.

But Isabella was by no means of such an inconstant nature; and,—though in a perfectly open and *cousinly* manner, without the least of love in her thoughts,—still remembered absent friends duly and frequently;—and the Roystons loved so dearly to talk about Hanover Street, and who came and who went, and how Mrs. Arnold had scolded, and Captain Templeton had teased—that it was impossible for her, had she wished it, altogether to doff the town and don the country. Boldly, in all her letters to Mrs. Lesage, did she desire to be remembered to the Goodrich family, and to Mr. Temple, (which last commission, it may be surmised, was never executed) and talked of him so reasonably and unreservedly, that even the Roystons ceased their raillery about “Bella’s lover, and the lock of hair she *must* have given him—or why should she have one curl fewer upon the right cheek than the left.”

One night, however,—perhaps the unusually strong tea had acted as a philtre—she felt, as any lady may have, at one time or other, felt with respect to any gentleman, a strong disposition of mind to take his fortunes and her own into consideration supposing that if, on any future day, he *might* like her, she could perhaps return his liking strongly enough to change the friends into lovers. She laughed at and scolded such a fancy for coming;—she fell asleep, but it was only to dream of the same thing. Now let any one who despises the good old faith in presentiment and sympathy of thought between the absent, tear out this leaf of my tale: for in it is set forth, how, by a strange coincidence, the doubles of her fancies were, at that moment, passing through Walter’s mind, and how he was lying musing on the strangeness of the possibility of awakening some morning, and finding himself the husband of Isabella Lesage.

The lady awakened from her dream—half angry at herself for the pertinacity of her own thoughts, and resolving, with a strong mental effort, to change their direction. The moon was shining so clearly upon her where she lay (the curtains at her feet being fully drawn back) that she resolved to try whether she could not read by its light, and was on the point of stretching out her hand to reach a book from a chair by her bedside—when she was at once prevented by a choking, overpowering sense that she was not alone in her chamber! that there was something behind the bed-curtain!

Whether this impression was conveyed to her by the waving of drapery or the tread of foot, she could never tell; enough that it seized her mind with such a fascinating terror as pre-

vented her from breathing, or withdrawing her eyes from the aperture at her feet. Through this she distinctly saw the branches of the rose tree flickering in the moonshine;—that she saw them was an evidence to herself that she was not asleep. She clasped her hands convulsively together under the clothes—the one imprinting upon the other a strong mark—and would have prayed; but her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth. As she looked—her agony increasing at every moment, there glided into the clear light at her feet, a tall figure,—and, leaning against the pillar, seemed anxiously to regard her. It was no delusion—she saw it distinctly—she noted its precise look and attire. It was a man, dressed in a blue uniform, with a sash round his waist and a sword at his side. His arms were folded, and he was supported by the bed post—gazing intensely at her. She thought that she must die—she could neither stir nor scream; but shut her eyes convulsively and waited, in an agony of suspense, for some sound. She could not have provoked one by a question, even to have broken the spell of her torment. But all was as profoundly silent as before, save the shivering of the leaves in the night wind; she strained her ear to catch any step, any information that her fearful visitant had departed. All was dead silence;—she could endure no longer, and fainted!—

How long she remained in this insensible state she could never tell—for her sensations, when she did return to consciousness, were those of one awakening out of sleep—and it was high morning, with sunshine and song of birds enough to hearten the most terror-stricken into composure again. She *could* be composed—but she could not forget; she could point out the exact spot where the feet of the intruder had been; she looked down upon her own hands—there were the marks of pressure to remind her that, at least, her dread had been real. She knew herself to be no visionary, nor one that gave way to the indulgence of a sickly fancy—and the form was yet so vividly before her eyes,—unlike the image of a dream which every succeeding moment of day-light dilutes! She met her own pallid and terrified countenance in the glass, and started at every sudden sound. She could not allow herself to doubt these evidences of some very extraordinary visitation.

She descended to breakfast as exhausted and worn out as if she had never slept. “Bless me!” exclaimed Cicely, as she entered the parlour, “was there ever anything seen like this? why, Bella, you are never very remarkable for red cheeks—but now—Mamma!—Nancy—did you ever—?”

The other two ladies, thus appealed to, could not but look at their guest; even the old gentleman, who was already at his

accustomed corner of the breakfast table, perused her harrassed features with a countenance of intense and grave curiosity, and then muttered to himself, in his low childish voice—

“Ay—ay—he was here last night!”

“What has been to be done, Bella?—nay, if Dale air agree with you no better than this, we must send you home without delay.”

“And go with her to nurse her, Cicely; wouldn’t that be nice? But you are ill,—positively you look as if you were going to die! Take some breakfast and an egg, and tell us all about it. Have you been disturbed by the knocking?”

“Cicely! Cicely!” said her mother, reproachfully.

“Nay, mamma! I am sure I have kept it long enough from Bella, to please you; and now she has heard it herself, a something worse. But never mind, love; you need not be afraid—it’s all rats—and you who love poetry books so, ough not to like a house the worse for its being haunted.”

Isabella could not help smiling at Cicely’s simple account of the mysteries of Dale Hall; she was curious to hear at what Mrs. Royston’s prohibition had pointed;—and, owning herself to have been disturbed by a peculiarly unpleasant dream, she requested that lady to explain the meaning of what she had said.

“Why, my love, we did not like to alarm you by mentioning them; because my daughters say it’s nothing but fancy, and Cicely, you see, will have it to be all rats; but we *have* been very much annoyed lately by some very unaccountable noise at night: when it’s only the knocking, I don’t care for it; but when it comes like some one whispering on the other side of the curtain, though I never can make out any words, it is very bad indeed.”

“Nonsense, mamma!” exclaimed Cicely, “rats whisper indeed! why, you have gone and terrified her worse than any one of us, you yourself.—Nay, Bella, I declare you shall eat this egg; it is nothing, depend upon it; but what did you hear?”

“It must have been a fancy,” began Isabella.

“So it must, dear; but what was it?—tell us all.”

Isabella found a twofold difficulty in describing the appearance she supposed herself to have seen;—in the natural reluctance she felt to mention a thing which might expose her to ridicule, and in the constant interruptions of the girls, who burst out simultaneously, long before she had concluded her narration with—

“I declare that wicked Colonel Levison’s very picture, just as he hangs in the hall at Levison Court!—Nonsense! you an

making it! you must have heard it described—the sash and all!”

“I have heard of Colonel Levison; but I never heard a description of either his person or any picture.”

“Are you sure? Bless me! mamma, but that is odd!”

“Ay—ay!”—chimed in the patriarch, who generally added some remark to every conversation,—“he was here last night;—I told you so before.”

“Come and walk—you will forget it before night, Bella,—and you shall sleep in our room. How you started when Allen came in with the toast! Come, we will go and meet the post. It was but a dream after all; the fresh air will do you good.”

“But the noises—tell me more about them,” said Isabella.

“Yes—yes—when we are out of doors. Come, bright mornings are precious; and we will take a fine long ramble, and not dine, if you please, mamma, until three o’clock.”

Isabella was not loath to adopt the mode of getting rid of her nervous feelings recommended by Cicely; and the three young ladies set forth upon their walk. During the course thereof, it appeared that Cicely, though unwilling that any body else should frighten their guest, had no objection herself to communicate particulars of the nocturnal disturbances which, for the last many months, had distressed the hearty inhabitants of the Hall. But a goblin tale has no charm when told in broad daylight, and under dancing leaves and a bright sun; and besides the quantity of Cicely’s wonders was past the digestion of any human credulity;—never did such a wholesale dose excite that creeping thrill which attends a single horror. In the midst of her most serious recital how cook had heard something going up stairs, step by step, with her, which sounded like a warming-pan with its lid clattering—the appearance of the post-boy at the further end of the long oak avenue, changed the current of their thoughts from the world of spirits to the world of letters.

And here, might such a freedom be permitted, I could digress long and leisurely upon the feelings excited by the distant sight of this bearer of tidings—this machine, who, himself unconscious, dispenses, in the course of his daily round, a life’s happiness or misery, it may be, to some poor creature or other, who is already half dead of expectation. I have watched his dull plodding figure, with a fearful interest, as he trudges on his way, dropping here a reproof—there, a consolation—extinguishing hope in one house—and anxiety in another; and as I have seen eager people run to meet him—to ‘meet their fate, perhaps a more troubled one than their darkest imaginings had anticipated.



No such contemplations, however, disturbed the three maidens, as they encountered the Giles of Dale parish, and stopping him, inquired :

"How many letters for the Hall this morning?"

The boy unstrapped his satchel, and examined its contents. "Please, Ma'am, none—yes—this big letter for Miss—I can't make out—care of Mrs. Royston."

"For you, Bella."

"And I cannot imagine what sudden extravagance can have seized my aunt, to send me a double letter and no frank."

"Perhaps," said Cicely, it is to announce her marriage. Come, there is a comfortable style yonder; you shall sit upon it and read it to us; I am longing to hear."

"I will look over it first myself, and see what is in it," replied Isabella, breaking the seal hastily. "What a very long letter! If you will walk slowly on, I will overtake you presently."

Thus dismissed, the Roystons had nothing to do, but to leave her to the undisturbed perusal of her aunt's epistle. They walked on, by no means contented with the prospect of extracts instead of the entire composition—every moment expecting to hear the feet of their companion following them. They had made such haste, while grumbling at her for being so close, that, when they turned, a few projecting boughs screened her from their view.

"Dear me! what a long time she is in reading it," said Cicely, "let us go back again."

They turned accordingly; but Isabella did not come to meet them, nor answer their shrill inquiries of "Bella, Bella! have you nearly done?"

"It must be a love letter," said Nancy, "she's so wrapt up in it."

They came yet nearer and called again. She did not stir. They approached her close, and perceived that she had slid from her seat, and was lying motionless, propped against the stile. The open letter was fluttering upon the bank beside her. She had fainted.

The girls made haste towards her in great alarm. Cicely tore off her bonnet, and opened her pelisse at the throat; while Nancy, screaming for assistance as loud as she could, sped towards a farm-house, across a ploughed field, in the hope of obtaining water. The inhabitants were presently roused, and a stout good-humoured looking woman wiped her arms from the washing-tub, accompanied Nancy to the spot, and catching up the still insensible Isabella, carried her off at a brisk pace towards the house, with the intention of administering the coun-

try remedies of a good fire, and a glass of hot elder-flower wine. The exercise of this sudden ride revived the young lady a little. Cicely followed with the letter in her hand; she first stole one peep, and then fairly read it through;—it was impossible to stop.

It is enough, for the present, to say that the letter was to announce the death of a nabob cousin whom Isabella had never seen, and Mrs. Lesage had almost forgotten,—and whose vast property, in consequence of his having died intestate, came to the former, as the heir-at-law. There was other news interesting enough to have made the fortune of any letter, at a common time; but the fact of Isabella Lesage becoming an heiress, for the present, swallowed up, in the astonishment which it excited, all meaner wonders.

\* \* \* \* \*

But we must return to Walter Temple and *his* surprises, which, however, did not chequer the current of his own monotonous existence, in the splendid form of sundry bags of rupees. He was, one evening, sitting quietly with Doctor Goodrich; (the physician's lady sleeping in an easy chair under cover of a large muslin handkerchief,) talking rather seriously about certain mercantile matters, when the conversation was interrupted by the tidings "that a person had arrived at the King's Arms, who was anxious to see Mr. Temple immediately."

So confident was he that this must be some mistake, that he interrogated the messenger as to particulars. The man was certain that he was right. He had been first sent to Mr. Arnold's to ascertain Temple's address, and had followed him to the Doctor's from his lodgings:—but he could not, or would not disclose the name or nature of the sender. He did not know—master had sent him—and he must go back at once.

Walter's curiosity was completely excited;—and though loath, after the fatigues of the day, to undertake a long walk, he followed the Mercury, all the way spending his thoughts in guesses which were totally unsatisfactory and equally far from the truth.

He had been expected; for a servant out of livery, was pacing the hall, and stepped forward respectfully, as Walter entered:—"Is it Mr. Temple?—Be pleased to walk this way, Sir."

Before Walter had time to make any inquiry, the door of a parlour was thrown open, and his name announced. The room was a large one, and imperfectly lighted by a pair of unsnuffed candles. At a first glance, however, he was aware that its only occupant was a lady, who rose from a sofa as he entered. Her words "Mr. Temple? have you forgotten me?" put an end at once to Walter's doubts, by a certainty which recalled so much

that belonged to old times, and old feelings, and those times and feelings of the most stirring nature, that it was a moment before he could stammer out, "Mrs. Levison! can this be you?"

"And why not?" replied she, in a voice of much feeling; "what is so natural, as that in meditating a voyage to the West Indies, I should decide upon sailing from this port, and that when here, I should seek you out? Will you ring the bell for more light?—I want to see whether you are as much changed as I am since we last parted."

They shook hands warmly—almost affectionately; and the entrance of the servant with additional candles, revealed them to each other distinctly. The lady was very tall, with a slight fragile figure, and a small head,—such a lady as Sir Thomas Lawrence would have loved to paint at full length. Her delicate flaxen hair was yet more luxuriant than of yore,—and if distress of mind had chased much of the laugh out of her rich violet blue eyes, it had replaced their old gaiety by a tenderness and sentiment far more touching. The colour on her cheek was radiant, too brilliant for health; her voice, too musical to remain long unbroken. She was more like a being lent to earth for a time than one framed to fight with its adversities. She gazed upon Temple, with a glance full of the past; tears came into her large eyes, and neither of them spoke for some moments, She was the first to break the silence which ensued.

"So you had altogether forgotten me?"

"Forgotten you!—you do not think so, while you say it;—but—but I *am* so much changed since we last parted!"

"I know—I know—I have followed your steps at a distance, and heard how fast and fairly you were becoming a grave and flourishing merchant," (he smiled.) "You have done wisely. Sit down and let us talk of old times:—we have a long evening before us,—many days, I hope, before I shall sail. Sit down, Mr. Temple, and do not look so much like a dreamer. I can assure you that this is my very self, all shadowy as I appear—there—shake hands again to assure yourself that I am mortal:—and now sit down,—I cannot stand long at a time," and as she spoke, she sunk back upon the sofa, pressing her hand to her side.

Walter was utterly overcome by the kindness of her manner; and let those laugh at him, who have never tried a three years' sojourn among strangers and common acquaintance, and have never known the almost painful luxury of being then greeted by one with whom so many memories of the past are connected. He tried to speak several times, but words would not come.

"Why! you are no stronger than myself," continued the lady, in the same tone (if such there be) of pensive liveliness:—"but you have recovered entirely.—Doctor—what is the name of your friend? did his part thoroughly and kindly—O that was a fearful night!"

"Do not return to it—it is all over now."

"I must—and we shall be all the calmer after we have once talked it over together. Had I been anything but the weak woman which I was born, and must die, all the dreadful scenes which ensued could never have happened. But you forgive me—you acquit me—do not you?"

"How can you ask such a question?" returned he warmly: "suspicion will attach itself to the most innocent; and yet, he might have been sure that his messenger, his tool—that I—could not, *dared* not have played him false. But I am wrong to be so vehement:—let us speak of the past no more."

"My first feelings," continued she, not attending to his request,—“my first feelings of consciousness after the dreadful moment when he forced you to fight him—O Heaven! I wonder how I can live to speak of them! I went on my knees before him;—I prayed in the utmost wretchedness of mind, that he would take me home again—that he would only allow me to remain upon the road till we learned the event of your wound. But he laughed;—that anything calling itself man *could* laugh at such a moment!—and he bade me consider my reputation; and remember what my guardian's treatment of me was likely to be, if, having once broken loose from his odious restraints, I fell again into his power. And he promised so much, and pleaded with the irresistibleness of the Arch-tempter himself, and entreated me to pardon his jealousy, which, he said, was only the excess of his love,—and then he assured me that your wound was a very slight one—that he had left you in good hands—and even then, I knew so much of his untamed nature, as to fear what he might do, if he were opposed too long! I little knew, when I yielded to this mixture of threat and solicitation, that I was on my way to become the wife of the notorious Colonel Levison. Ah! why did you not tell me this, when you brought me his letters!—Forgive me! forgive me!—I did not mean to reproach you—we have all done wrong; and even had I known it, so wretched was my home to a girl as full of romance as I was then, and as credulous—I am sure that I should have embraced almost any chance—which held out a prospect of liberty.”

"And you went on"—replied Walter, fascinated, in spite of himself, to inquire further into so painful a story.

"Alas! I did!—It was my fate—I went on, and completed:

my own destruction only just in time—for Mr. Grant arrived before we had been married half an hour. I never saw anything so dreadful as his rage was; I was standing with my husband, looking out of the window of the inn parlour,—my feelings were a perfect chaos of confusion and unhappiness; and I wondered, as my eyes fell upon the thousand names scrawled upon the glass—whether ever any of all those brides had ever stood there before me, with as wretched a heart as mine was at that moment,—and he was saying to me; ‘Come Sybil, shall I take off your diamond ring, and add the names of Mr. and Mrs. Temple to this happy list?’ when I saw a chaise and four fly, rather than drive up to the door. My guardian got out, with a face as pale as a corpse’s. I hear his grating voice in the lobby, and my husband, seizing my hand,—for it was past offering any resistance—led me to the door of the parlour:—‘Too late, Mr. Grant,’ said he triumphantly—‘you are come half an hour too late to witness my happiness!—You must now allow me to present my wife to you—Mrs. Colonel Levison!’”

“‘Fool!’ exclaimed Mr. Grant, in a voice almost inarticulate with passion, as he seized me so furiously by the wrist, that I shall bear the marks of his violence to my grave with me:—‘do you know what you have done?’”

“I babbled out some incoherent reply,—for, could I have spoken before, this new shock was enough to strike me dumb. ‘And you, Sir,’ continued he, cooling as he went on, ‘do you think that you have married the great fortune?—You have gone on a little too fast; perhaps you never heard that until my death, she will not receive a farthing of it, if she marries without my consent. I shall outlive you, Sir,—and to give myself the best possible chance, I shall return home quietly, and waste no further words upon you.’ ‘Sybil,’ said he, ‘God knows that I am sorry for you,—harsh as I have been,—you little know what a wretched lot you have drawn upon yourself.’”

“Levison appeared thunderstruck at this information. How he had escaped coming to hear of it before, I could never tell,—and Mr. Grant, with a laugh, such as I hear yet, walked away as coldly as if he had been counting his steps. O, the sound of those steps dying away! Then, I began already to feel what I had done—for I dared not turn round and look at my husband, whose face, I am sure, at that moment, was a demon’s, disappointed of his prey.”

Walter could sit still no longer,—he arose, and paced the room hastily.

“Nay, nay, my friend!—do not be so much moved—it is all

over now,—and I am recalling these trials for the last time, to be certain that I have escaped them for ever. I need not tell you what Colonel Levison's conduct was, when he found that his possession of any part of my property depended upon the will of another; and that other, a mortified and vindictive rival. The insult, the aggressions, the bodily violence in which he wreaked his disappointment upon me, are gone over, and I am yet alive. But his cup was full! He was in constant dread of some crime or other being exposed, which might subject him to the punishment of law—and had he lived—let us forget him. He died—and the ecstasy of my feelings when the news reached me, was horrible to myself. When I tell you that at that moment I was forcibly confined lest I should claim the protection of justice,—you may forgive some little of my rapture.”

“And where,” inquired Walter, breathing more freely, now that the hateful part of the story was past—“where did you retire afterwards?”

“I returned to my guardian. I was driven from Levison Court by my husband's exasperated creditors. I knew enough of man to be sure that even Mr. Grant could not find in his heart to refuse shelter and assistance to so wretched and frail a creature as I was then. And besides, his heart was softened by continual lamentation over my ill-starred marriage, and repenting of a vow which he made in the first moment of passion, to leave me to my fate.”

“And do you wear mourning for him also?”

“I do. It is only a few months since he died;—and I am alone in the world;—the uncontrolled mistress of a large fortune. But I am dying. My physicians have told me that my days are numbered, if I remain another winter in England; and I am going, at their express recommendation, to my property in the West Indies, to try what a warmer climate may do, for a frame so completely shattered, and a heart *not* entirely broken.”

A slight smile, but as melancholy as ‘passing sunshine upon a wintry landscape,’ accompanied her last words:—“And now tell me all about yourself. So you are bent upon becoming a merchant prince?—Levison used to grow furious if he ever heard your name mentioned. Did you ever see him again—after?”—

“Once,—and once only.”

“And did he speak of me?” continued she quickly.

“Spare me, I entreat you! this is a question which it is impossible for me to answer,” replied Temple, his features crimsoning intensely—“he is gone to juster hands than ours.”

“Well, we have dwelt too long upon this subject. Come,

Mr. Temple, let us forget it. I have some little of my butterfly spirit left, and can cast off my cares when I will—*sometimes*. You shall tell me all about ships and sea-stores,—and send your friend the Doctor to me. I must have his advice before I go. If you were a true cavalier, you ought to offer to escort me on my lonely voyage.”

But the measure of Temple's discomposure was full:—some chord had been touched which gave him most exquisite pain; and he was unable to lighten his tone as he had done. The evening was spent in conversation, deeply interesting to both parties;—and when he returned home to his pillow that night,—it was not to sleep.

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## PART IV.

### MATTERS OF PARTNERSHIP.

A FEW mornings after this interview, there was as much laughing and whispering in the office, at the expense of Temple's dim eyes and haggard brow, as on a former occasion, which has already been mentioned:—though the wits, who had learned to look upon their comrade as a wise man, were not, as then, careless whether or not their impertinence reached his ears. He had established his character for sagacity and long-sightedness so firmly, that they had of late been accustomed to consult him on any little adventures of their own; even the vitriolic Mr. Merryweather, unable to rein in a sneer at “Temple's luck,” had asked his advice on the matter of certain printed goods, in which he meant to speculate. Temple always gave his counsel freely;—and though he kept studiously aloof from any of the number, had become respected, if not popular, among them.

But they might have shouted in his ear whatever nonsense they pleased, that morning; for he was so entirely absorbed in his own thoughts that he would never have heard them. So absent, indeed, was he, that Mr. Arnold summoned him to a private conference, thrice before he answered.

“Why, have you heard?” said his *chef*, beginning to speak before he had well shut the door of the inner office—“that you look so pale! I never closed my eyes last night. Where were you? I sent for you twice; but read that—read”—and thrusting a letter into Temple's hands, he began to walk to and fro, with

a flurry of manner, much unlike the usual composure of the stately Mr. Arnold.

Temple read;—and his brow darkened. The letter was to announce the unlooked-for and disgraceful failure of a house in London, with which their own was so intimately connected—that disastrous consequences might be apprehended. It was no wonder that Mr. Arnold could not sleep!

“Well, Sir! was there ever such news?—what are we to do?”

“I am surprised,” replied Temple, “that you should think of asking my advice.”

“No nonsense!—things are in too serious a state to be trifled with. I will have your opinion. My head is not so clear as it used to be. I have lived too idle a life, and been too extravagant for the last many years;—but I have confidence in you,—and you are well acquainted with the state of the books, which I am not.”

“I thought, Sir”—

“No matter what you thought,” continued Mr. Arnold, who was by far too much agitated to attend to niceties of speech:—“we have been going on madly, I am afraid, and I have allowed things to take their own course;—and then so much money locked up in these d—d speculations!—What are we to do, Temple?—Do you think we can possibly escape?”

“If you seriously ask my opinion, you must give me a little time to consider,” replied Walter, whose spirit rose with any emergency. He took up the letter, and read it over again deliberately, while Mr. Arnold paced the room with helpless impatience. His face brightened with energy, and a confidence in his own powers, as he said, “Dear Sir, I think that you are unnecessarily alarming yourself!—If we can only weather out a month or two, I am almost sure that you could be entirely extricated from the consequences of this failure.”

“You are?” repeated Arnold, catching something of his spirit.

“Yes,” replied he, more confidently: “I think that the thing might be done:—perhaps I feel more hopeful in my judgment,—that it has not been altogether so sudden a one as you may think. I have foreseen that something of this kind might occur, for the last many months, and have, therefore, accustomed myself to consider it.”

“And you did not warn me!”

“I would have done—you may remember—”

“I do—I do—and like a pompous fool that I was, I desired you not to interfere in matters which did not concern you. I am richly paid for my obstinacy!—Well, Sir, if I asked your pardon now, you would not believe me to be sincere:—but tell me, Temple, what do you advise,—and I will thank you all the



rest of my days. I could not survive the disgrace of"—he could not bring himself to utter the word *bankruptcy*.

Walter could not but be amazed at the complete change which the chances of a few hours had wrought in the manners of the haughty and purse-proud Mr. Arnold. He had not yet fully learned that, with some persons, the wish to maintain their own consequence so far supplies the place of genuine integrity, that, with this their best possession in danger, everything like the assumption of state is forgotten, and he is the dearest friend, who has the most efficient help to offer. And besides this feeling, Mr. Arnold was utterly devoid of that decision of character, the want whereof, in seasons of emergency, has produced consequences as fatal as the work of premeditated iniquity:—and threw himself thankfully upon the mercy of anybody who could make up his mind for him. He had inherited his business from a pains-taking father, whose life's labour it had been to scrape it together, and who had, fortunately for his peace of mind, died just in time to escape being afflicted by beholding the mismanagements of his son, and the extravagances of his son's wife: and its importance had been diminishing for many years, though so well established was its credit, that few, if any, imagined in what a precarious state its concerns were at present standing.

But, to cut so dry a subject as short as possible, it is sufficient to say that on being thus pressed, Walter fully explained to his principal, the measures which he thought might, if immediately adopted, extricate the concern from any present or future danger. The worth of its well-established credit was to be tried to the uttermost, and while Mr. Arnold was to reduce his personal expenditure rigidly and secretly, he was carefully to avoid exhibiting any marks of anxiety,—any signs of retrenchment which might alarm the timid,—or give occasion of remark to the slanderous. This was a hard task, far exceeding in difficulty the one he proposed for himself—a voyage to the West Indies to collect debts, and to expedite remittances. It was easier to brave the perils of stormy waters, strange roads, and false brethren, than to remain tranquilly at home, and preserve an unruffled front above an anxious heart. Yet the service was not a light one, and he would only undertake it, upon condition of his being made a partner in the house, should he return successful.

This proposal, which, at any other juncture, would have been received as Walter's last speech in Water street, was now stated boldly, and listened to without disgust. Temple felt that his fortunes hung upon that moment. He was endowed with that boldness and determination we have just counted as so valuable: the vicissitudes of his early life, too, had not been

without their use. He was excited by an atmosphere in which many could not have breathed. He could act under the weight of burdens which would break frailer ones than himself down to the very dust;—and he was honourable as well as ambitious. To all these requisites for rising, he added an energy of manner which could not fail to impress the feeble, and those who like to be spared the trouble of thinking, with almost incontrovertible strength. His measures and reasons appeared so convincing to Mr. Arnold, that the latter assented to them with hardly a show of deliberation; and before they left the private office, matters were fully understood between them:—and the merchant of late so haughty, walked home to his dinner, satisfied that he had done right, in shifting the responsibility from his own shoulders.

It is a question whether ever any general, on being invested with the command of an army, or monarch mounting the steps of his throne for the first time, ever felt more elate than Temple did at the moment when he turned homewards. He walked along the streets as much absorbed in the *almascharisms* of his expectations, as the man who has just found a treasure, and forgets how many of the good things of life are past the power of money to buy. Mrs. Lesage, who met him, was more puzzled than ever to account for the exultation of his mien,—and Doctor Goodrich who looked in at his lodgings, to give some account of Mrs. Levison's state of health, was amazed at the indifference with which his friend listened to the tale of her danger, considering the reports which rumour was already beginning to spread abroad.

"Really, Temple, you do not look quite yourself—so feverish, so flushed—let me feel your pulse—let me prescribe for you."

"What," replied Walter buoyantly; "are you afraid that my *paroxysms* are going to return?—But I beg your pardon, for my absence; you have seen my poor friend—what is your opinion?"

"I have been telling you, if you could only have listened. She is in a most precarious state, certainly—I will not say that she is past the chance of a recovery, and the voyage and the warmer climate *may* restore her. But it would be unwise to build too much upon them, and she is so imprudent, by her own account—so careless of herself!—if she is to be kept alive, it can be only with the most anxious watchfulness on the part of her attendants.—Do not let me depress you by what I am saying—I have told you the worst—you know my straightforward plan of never hiding or adding to the truth. Have you heard that your other friend, Miss Lesage, has returned with a fortune in her train?"

"A fortune!" echoed Temple mechanically, all the while thinking of his own.

"If you were not a sober man, Temple, I know what I should think, if I did not say it—you are so astray, so unlike yourself. Good morning—and a good appetite to you—and—before I go, let me warn you, when you visit your friend in an evening, not to sit *too late*;—early hours are of the utmost consequence in her case."

The tone in which this innuendo was uttered, made its way through the confused thoughts, with which Temple was occupied. He blushed deeply.

"I hope," said the doctor shaking hands with him kindly—"I *wish* I could restore her, for your sake."

"My dear friend!"

"You do not pretend to misunderstand me?"

"You perplex me—you alarm me—surely this is not your usual straightforward way; sit down again—nay—you shall not so much as look at your hat and gloves, till you have told me fully what all this means."

"I mean what I say;" replied the doctor, quite willing to remain, and talk the matter over, "in intimating a return to something yet closer than your former good understanding;—you cannot pretend not to comprehend me *now*? The connexion is in every respect desirable, you are both young, she is rich, you well born."

Temple gave a sudden start, which was, however, unperceived by his friend.

"She has suffered too severely, not to be thankful, and well she may! for the protection and regard of—come, I am not going to make you vain—she owed to me this morning, that you were the only friend she had in the world—and, I dare say, that the present company always excepted,—you would say as much of her. If this voyage to Jamaica . . ."

"I have not had time to tell you, that I am also called thither," interrupted Temple, scarcely knowing what he said.

"You are joking."

"Nay, Doctor, I am in serious earnest—I shall sail in the *Arnold*; but do not mention it at present, if you please."

"Why, then," replied the other slightly piqued, "why then make me say so much? I take it as somewhat disingenuous of you, to affect all this ignorance, when it seems that your plans are so fully matured."

"I affected no ignorance, and you must not be angry with me. Listen to me, and you shall judge for yourself, whether or not I have a right to be anxious and astray, and surprised by a succession of events strange enough, to appear like the immediate pointings of destiny."

"So I will—but your dinner is growing cold while we are

talking, and mine at home is waiting; my wife can bear anything better than waiting for her dinner; come in to us this evening, and I will hear every word you have to say, and bear as patiently with confusions and contradictions as my dear old friend Lesage bore with mine, in the days when I was in love with Mrs. Goodrich."

"In love with Mrs. Goodrich!" repeated Temple to himself, "can such a thing ever have been?"

A few evenings after this interview, Walter, having made a "clean breast" to the Doctor, as far as he could, without implicating Mr. Arnold's circumstances, prepared to prove his powers of abstraction, by sitting down to chess. Mrs. Lesage and Isabella were there; the latter so entirely unchanged by her heiressship, that her aunt declared, in a mortified tone, "that no one could ever guess that Miss Lesage," (she had dropped the Isabel in consideration of the legacy) "had come into possession of so splendid a fortune!" she was resolved, however, to atone for such a want of propriety, by as unremitting a trumpetting, as her niece's quick ears would permit, and to extol her wealth and consequence, found no better means than to cry down Mrs. Levison's claims to either, with might and main. The name had some how or other lost much of its magic; "So strange! that she should think of travelling without a companion! and so ill too! and that Mrs. Arnold should have invited her to pass the remainder of her stay in England at her house:—Mrs. Arnold who was grown so lazy as to dislike visitors—have you not heard her say so, Mrs. Goodrich, a thousand times?"

"Yes ma'am—heard of her!—yes—she was a Miss Royston."

"It must be so—I cannot make it out, and now they are talking all over the town, how she turns out to be an old flame of Mr. Temple's, and that he is going to be married to her directly. There is something very odd about her that I neither understand nor admire, and I don't believe she is half as rich as they say."

"You forget, aunt," said Isabella archly, "that she is a Levison."

"By marriage only, you simpleton," returned the lady sharply; "and then to think of Arnold making Mr. Temple a partner. I see it all—amazingly well contrived—they are welcome to each other!"

"I wish Mr. Temple every happiness—and she is rich and beautiful."

"I see no beauty about her," said her aunt, in her most acid tone. "She is as tall as a whipping-post, and too thin for my

taste,—and will have a red nose before she is thirty, and as for manner! when I called upon her,—a connexion of the family, Mrs. Goodrich, her incivility was most extraordinary—would you believe it!—she never rose from her chair!—a Queen could have done no more.”

“What did the Queen do?” chimed in Mrs. Goodrich in her doziest voice.

“Poor woman! she grows duller every day!” whispered Mrs. Lesage with a shrug of contempt.

“I saw the Queen when I was at Bath,” continued the physician’s lady, who had some misty idea that she might be expected to talk, in her own house.

“Bath!” caught up the widow eagerly, “O why are we not there now? Miss Lesage—my love—when shall we go to Bath? It rests with you to fix!”

“Then let me say not at all; and do not look so disappointed. If I live till another spring, I will travel with you as far as Kamschatka, if you please, or any where else; but to be exhibited at a watering-place—to be paraded as an heiress with a diamond label about my neck—Mr. Temple, tell me, if you can spare your thoughts from your game, which, judging from your proud and pleased look, I imagine you have won,—is not the thought of being carried to market shocking to any young lady of sensibility?”

Temple laughed—owned that the idea was not an attractive one, and bade the ladies good-night. Mrs. Lesage was far more ready to cry than to laugh at her niece’s odd notions—but times were changed. Isabella was now rich, and might say what she pleased without fear of contradiction.

“O my love!—I am delighted with your spirit of independence, and if you don’t like Bath, there is no more to be said!—but you need not have appealed to Mr. Temple. He is gone, I suppose, to pay his usual evening visit to Mrs. Levison. I wonder when they are to be married—I hope, for respectability’s sake, before they sail.”

“Yes, there is a sale to-morrow at the next door,” observed Mrs. Goodrich, rousing herself with a desperate nod.

Mrs. Lesage had guessed right. Mr. Temple was gone to spend the evening with his friend. In the matter of their marriage, she was somewhat premature in her statements—though, in her defence, it may be said, that the rumour of such a connexion was encouraged by the Arnolds, for obvious reasons, and that the terms on which Temple stood with Mrs. Levison, were singular ones—and such as the world was sure to interpret in its own way.

It has been gathered that, while he was acting as Colonel

Levison's friend, in the matter of the elopement, the latter had fancied that the fair Sybil looked more kindly upon his emissary, than was consistent with her faith to himself; and such was, in truth, the case—though Walter must be acquitted of ever having encouraged such a fancy, by any extraordinary attention on his part, or wish to recommend himself to her good graces. We have seen the consequences of the Colonel's jealousy—blessed consequences to Temple, they may indeed be called, inasmuch as the thoughts of his sick bed had urged him to a complete change of aim and pursuit, and the perseverance in which was as honourable to his firmness as to his good feeling.

When, therefore, he met Mrs. Levison again, the condition of both had undergone great alteration. She was naturally of a clinging facile nature, and, early deprived of a mother's guidance, had been alternately scolded and flattered, till, at one moment her fancy represented herself as the chosen victim of misfortune—and at another she would sparkle out in all the brilliancy of high spirits, which she had never learned to moderate, and feel, and act like one privileged to say and do whatever she pleased, yet do no wrong. The effect of misfortune upon a character at once so pliable and yet so resolute, had been to awaken in her mind an unhealthy craving for sympathy; to concentrate her own thoughts and feelings upon her own sorrows, till she had lost the power of entertaining any other impressions, save for a passing moment. She was one of those who expect, even if they do not claim, a degree of observance and allowance which makes friendship a matter of sacrifice and sympathy on one side only—and who, when they meet with such devotion, can at times, throw off the memory of past sufferings and the thought of present cares, with wonderful facility, and assume a gaiety which many imagine to be incompatible with deep feeling. But the many, in this point, may occasionally judge unjustly;—the depth of feeling is not impugned by its having been exclusively employed in self-compassion, nor by ebullitions of liveliness, as purely involuntary as the winking of the eyelids or the drawing of the breath—moods wherein so long as you can dance along from mirth to mirth, you can cheat yourself into forgetting all your griefs, old and new. They who have ever been borne away by such capricious gaiety, know well the misery and the deadness of the pause when it can no longer be maintained.

Of these was Mrs. Levison;—the moments of depression were many, in which she suffered with the helplessness and the hopelessness of a child; but she enjoyed compensating seasons of light-heartedness almost amounting to recklessness. In her gaiety as well as her sorrow she was utterly self-engrossed;

she loved others as far as she could make them her own, without adverting to the necessity of giving as well as receiving—and to the fact that such love as hers is after all a chain, though pleasant to wear, will be felt as such sooner or later, unless the recipient have reached that impossible point of perfection—total disinterestedness. In particular, she relied upon Temple;—she could not admit the idea of his having any time or thought at the disposal of any one else than herself; though she urged her claims with a sweetness, to resist which a man must have an heart of flint. She presently settled in her own mind that it was impossible she could ever be interested in Isabella Lesage, and shrunk at the most delicate approach of her unaffected woman's sympathy; she tried to escape the tacit rebuke administered by the calmness of a mind less sickly than her own; and yet, at another moment, would bewail her estate as singularly destitute and friendless.

"We can have nothing in common," she would say to herself, "for she is all reason, and I am all feeling. I wonder whether Mr. Temple really does like her *much*?" Poor Sybil!—hers was a sweet nature spoiled by misfortune.

"Yes," she said, on the evening I have already mentioned, when Mr. and Mrs. Arnold had discreetly withdrawn, and she was alone with the one chosen counsellor, "yes—I hate England—I leave it without regret—nothing interests me here!—no one cares for me.—It has been my hard fate to be misused and misunderstood. I leave England—I hope to see it no more!"

"You are too melancholy to-night, dear lady," replied Temple; "you are not strong, and therefore out of spirits. I am leaving England, like yourself, with little to welcome me back—yet I shall return to it with joy.

"We are different, very different," she answered, yet more despondingly; and, hoping in her heart of hearts to be contradicted, added, "and you have one friend who will be delighted to see you again, and whom you will be delighted to see—Miss Lesage."

"I?" replied he, wondering what strange connection of ideas could bring Isabella before Mrs. Levison at that moment.

"Yes, you will come back and be a rich man and marry her, while I shall be laid under some lonely palm tree, or in some burial place;—but not among my own people,—at rest!—O what a blessed thought,—at rest!"

"And why, if your fancy is pleased to picture my lot as so prosperous a one, should it show your own as so gloomy? You are too generous; you should reserve a fairy gift or two for yourself."

"Why?" asked she, as tears filled her eyes, "but no matter.

I am foolishly low to-night;—give me my guitar—I must positively try to sing my spirits back again.”

“But you are so far from strong;—do not try your voice—you know that Doctor Goodrich says that you should not sing another note till spring.

“Where shall I be in the spring?—But pray indulge me,” said she, in that caressing tone which there was no withstanding. “Did you ever hear that charming old Irish melody—“*Shoul aroon*,” though it loses much by being sung with English words?”

She took up the instrument and sung :

“I wish I were on yonder hill,  
’Tis there I’d sit and cry my fill,  
And all the hour of the twilight still  
I’d mourn for the days that are departed,—  
Lone—lone—all alone!—  
How is my joy in the summer time gone!  
And the smile of golden morning all sorrowful is grown  
To the eye of the broken-hearted.  
My heart is as heavy as lead,  
My parents both they wish me dead.—

“But what am I doing?—making myself worse, and you too! Come, you shall have a song of a livelier strain;—and do not look so uneasy;—it shall be the last I will sing in England.”

The lighter melody was set to these words :

Farewell! Sir churlish lover,  
My prison dreams are past,  
And your dominion over  
You thought must always last.  
Frown on the next you snare,  
And she’ll like me rebel,  
And scorn your offerings rare,  
And your peace-tokens tear,  
While I go free as air.—  
Farewell! farewell!

Farewell! nor hope to bind me  
With vows a week too late;  
To-morrow’s eve shall find me  
Your simple rival’s mate;  
He sought me long in vain,—  
And all I’ve learned from you  
*Sans doute* I’ll teach again  
My fond obedient swain,  
And hold in turn the chain.  
Adieu! Adieu!



"You do not like my song!—well, it is silly and heartless—and yet, after all—no—I will not, even in joke, pretend that it suits my philosophy. You are grave; you have been wearing yourself out in my service—I know you have;" and she turned full upon him those large sweet eyes, full of earnest tenderness unstained by any coquetry.

Who shall resist his fate? The bloom which the exercise of singing had called up, was yet upon her cheek; her long hair was bound in a fanciful manner with a narrow lace handkerchief, the ends of which fluttered free upon her ivory-white shoulder. She had never looked so fascinating,—and Walter was doing homage to her beauty in the passion of the moment, on the point of uttering the words which she raised herself up to hear, with a smile of such eager beauty, as was almost too dazzling to belong to Earth—when she suddenly gave a loud scream, and fell into his arms, apparently lifeless.

He struggled—while she hung about his neck, still in a dead swoon—to reach the bell, and rung it violently, once, twice, thrice, before any one came. At last Vial, Mrs. Levison's own servant, made his appearance, and her maid, who carried her into her own chamber, and had immediate recourse to the usual remedies. She was easily recovered—and then Walter remembered, that, even in the midst of the confusion of the moment, he had noticed a peculiar sneer upon the face of the man-servant—a look for which there was no calling him to account, but which said odious things, though it only lasted for one moment. He ran over a thousand suspicions in the space of an instant. Why should Vial thus regard him? Walter had befriended the entire family, established his two sons as office boys, and put his wife into the hands of Mrs. Goodrich, who, in her own lazy way, was a benevolent woman,—that he might be able to attend his mistress with an easy mind;—and the man had always showed a grateful sense of these good offices. It was very disagreeable; but nothing could be made of it;—and that look teased Temple as much as words spoken in a dream, perplex the waking man who tries to recall them.

But the time of their departure from England was too near to allow him much leisure to brood over any minor perplexities. Mrs. Levison could give no account of the cause of that sudden fainting; but it was observable that her spirits did not rally with their usual elasticity; and, in spite of her former professions of pleasure at the prospect of leaving England, she wept almost constantly as the day approached. She was as wilful as a child, and resisted every one's recommendation that she should take with her some person older than herself, as compa-

nion and comforter,—one of rank sufficiently near her own to be able to give her countenance should she need it, and kind enough to nurse her tenderly. She would not hear of such a plan;—she could not bear people older than herself;—Vial and Alexander were enough for her protection on common occasions, and she was sure of Mr. Temple's good offices in any emergency. These fancies, so obstinately maintained, were a sad evidence or a diseased mind, as well as a decaying body.

Two short days in England were now all that remained. Walter could do no less than call to take leave of the Lesages, and to thank Isabella for her kindness towards the capricious invalid which had not quite met its deserved return. He was surprised by the emotion with which the young lady received his visit. She hesitated over every word she uttered, and a hot blush kept alternately deepening and dying upon her cheeks. When he took her hand, it was as cold as if it had lain in a tomb. Temple bore with him a consciousness which served as an ægis against the inroads of vanity, or else he might have intercepted this agitation in a manner most flattering in his self-love. All this time Mrs. Lesage continued fidgetting in and out of the room, anxious at the length of this parting interview, which neither seemed unwilling to prolong, while Isabella's confusion increased, and at length—upon her aunt's re-appearing some seventh time, under pretext of a codicil to her farewell which was to be delivered to Mrs. Levison,—mustered her courage, and fairly said:

“Will you oblige, me, aunt, by leaving us uninterrupted for a few minutes; Mr. Temple shall not go till he has received your adieux.”

Mrs. Lesage's face became the colour of a peony, with sudden curiosity; but Isabella was obviously waiting for her absence before she would speak, and she was too much of a gentlewoman to play the part of eaves-dropper. But what in the world *could* her niece mean? Temple wondered the same, and when her aunt had slowly retired, in the most unenviable agony of speculation, there was silence for a long minute.

“Mr. Temple,” Isabella began, tremulously, “I have a task to perform, to which I feel myself totally unequal. The letter I am about to show you, I found on my dressing-table this morning; I have not the least idea by whom it was placed there; and though I cannot withhold it from you, and dare not use any means of conveyance save my own hands, I believe, with all my heart, that it has been fabricated for the worst of purposes;—here it is.”

Walter took the paper from her hand, and stared upon its contents with a fixed glance of amazement and disgust. These

were the following words, villainously ill-written and worse spelt :

“Miss Lesage,

“If you be Walter Temple’s friend, you will warn him not to marry Mrs. Levison, who is no widow—for her husband is alive, and she knows it, which comes at the peril of the life of  
“Yours, who shall be nameless.”

It would be superfluous to describe Walter’s feelings as he perused these words. True, the letter might be only a trick; but who could be the player-off of such a joke? That Levison was alive, hardly might be; that his wife suspected anything of the kind, was utterly impossible: and then, why was Miss Lesage made the organ of its conveyance? why not have communicated directly with himself? So motionless did he sit, while such thoughts were pouring across his mind, that the utter stillness became absolutely fearful, and Isabella was compelled to break it, saying, with a violent effort :

“Mr. Temple, this *cannot*—I hope this is not true!”

“True!” replied he with an effort yet mightier than her own, “be sure it is a joke, and a very poor one! Thank you, however, for making it known to me; and now I have waited till my last moment, (looking at his watch coolly,) I must say, Farewell! and Heaven bless you till we meet again! You are one of the few whose faces will appear before me whenever I think of home.”

He wrung her hand convulsively, and before she could collect herself sufficiently to return his adieu, he was gone!

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## PART V.

### A RETURN TO WELL-KNOWN PLACES.

THAT Walter’s indifference to the contents of this anonymous billet was only assumed, may have been already surmised. He had long ago entertained suspicions,—perhaps from the natural misgiving, that such a deliverance was too great a good fortune to fall upon him; but the lapse of time had gradually worn them away, and they had been almost forgotten, till refreshed in all their ancient force by that mysterious warning, which *might* after all, be only a joke. And yet there were

minute circumstances which singly, were of no value, might be accounted for as the effect of imagination—but in conjunction with each other, must favour the notion, Colonel Levison was yet alive, or be ascribed at once to natural influence. The shadow at Mrs. Arnold's ball, the dances at Dale Hall, (which had been a favourite scene of pranks and debaucheries)—though every pains to explain away, and to discover their cause had proved ineffectual, it was possible that Isabella's correspondent might possess some clue for the perfect unravelling of the mystery. Temple was aware that it would be a wearisome and unpromising pursuit, to attempt to discover who this correspondent might be, in a place so wide as our town, and that it would expose his own suspicions more fully to the person or persons, whose interest it was to perplex and ensnare him. It was of so much consequence to find out the channel through which the intelligence was conveyed, as to ascertain whether the intelligence was true or false; and the time he could devote to such research was so short, that only one step could be taken. He had, with his usual promptitude, decided what step should be, before he had taken leave of Isabella; and he refrained from communicating his purpose to her, as he felt that it was one wherein secrecy was of as much consequence as speed.

He made all possible haste to the office, and, in two words, informed Mr. Arnold that he *must* be absent from town for four or five days; but that it was of great importance that his absence should be concealed, and most particularly from Mrs. Arnold. To do this was not very difficult, as his engagements for leaving England had become so numerous, that it was expected that his absence would be even remarked, and the loss of papers, which he took away with him from the office, would have been sufficient excuse, had he chosen to be absent for a week instead of a day. He deposited these at Mrs. Arnold's, and then hastened to find Doctor Goodrich, whom he was necessary to take into confidence. By good fortune, the doctor's medicine arrived at his own door, at the same moment as Temple; who, beseeching a private audience, told him what had happened, where he was going to, and where he wanted assistance. The Doctor stared and hemmed—utterably shocked when made acquainted with the contents of the billet,—would have made many objections to Temple's scheme, but was overruled by the vehemence of his own feelings;—and at last, half reluctantly, gave him the run of an old press, which stood in a laboratory leading out of

his study, wherein he could find garments sufficiently obsolete to metamorphose him into any character he chose to adopt.

Temple requested to be let alone for a few moments, and while the Doctor's orderly and every day notions were undergoing much discomposure, at the thought of his being led into any aiding or abetting of a masquerading, Walter was busily at work, with a strange and eager zest, which approached somewhat near the positive enjoyment, such as a drunkard experiences when, after a long fast, his lip touches a glass running over with some rare cordial. Blame him not—ye who have no pleasure in adventure, unless you could make human nature over again:—if he laughed aloud, as he tied his long black hair out of sight, and stained his face two shades redder than his natural complexion, and stuffed himself out with one or two of the well fed Doctor's waistcoats, until he had added ten years to his age, while the shovel hat and slouching loose upper Benjamin and ample top boots made him a present of an additional lustre. He heard a voice in the study, and having locked up his own garments in the press, issued forth, curious to try the effect of his new habiliments.

Mrs. Goodrich had hunted out her husband, to propound some small dilemma for his solution. The Doctor, though a sedate man, and not given to unnecessary motion, absolutely jumped with surprise when Walter strode forth—not Temple in masquerade, but positively another character;—and the lady, who was shy of strangers, crept behind her husband, with a look of great surprise, and her usual weak “Dear me, Doctor!”

“Fine weather for my ride home,” said Walter, in a voice of forty-five—“Good day, Doctor;—and I'll bring my little girl the next time I come over, if she is no better. Shake hands, madam—and if you are ever coming our way—my mistress will be proud to give you a cup of tea, and a bed, and your husband too!” He tramped out of the room with a burly step, which, as Mrs. Goodrich averred, “was enough to shake the house down; and dear me, Doctor,” continued she, “what a thumb! I thought he would have pinched my hand to bits.”

The Doctor whistled, and thought many things within himself, which he did not consider it discreet to promulgate. Perhaps the circumstance of his meeting Mr. Arnold in the street soon after, and that gentleman's mouth—as was now usually the case,—being full of Temple's praises, might have some effect in settling his dislocated thoughts; but all that evening, he sat muttering to himself “Wild work!—strange beings these young men now-a-days!”

Walter had, in the old wild times of his youth, been remark-

able for his reckless horsemanship, and did not on the present occasion spare his steed. The town was soon left behind, and a wide peaceful country opened before the rider, with a blue hill in the horizon, fringed with wood and crowned with a beacon: such a scene as makes its way with the lover of nature by its calm richness, and the varied lights and shades, dropped upon it by passing sunshine and clouds. Much has been said of the inspiration of mountain scenery—and of the strong cords wherewith Nature holds the hearts of men, who have been born among her clouds and fastnesses, and with which she is ever drawing wanderers to return to the rugged homes of their childhood. So be it; but the feelings are not shallower, though stiller than the mountaineer's, with which one, who has been long in populous cities pent, beholds such a fair familiar scene rise before him—wooing him, with its repose and fertility, to turn aside from his cares, and become a child once more: and though Temple was one to whom beetling cliffs and tumbling waters might have been supposed to be more attractive than a campaign like this, the sights of well-known knolls tufted with trees, which stood out in peculiar forms against the horizon sky—of the afternoon sunshine glittering upon the windows of distant farm-houses, from the chimneys whereof the smoke seemed hardly to ascend;—of long lanes cradled over with beech trees, and set in rich hedge-rows such as many an inhabitant of the city has never seen;—these impressed him strongly though gently;—the tumult of his spirit subsided to a calmer mood—and he found himself riding slowly, long before he had come within five miles of Levison Court.

But it was necessary that he should rouse himself, and support the character which his disguise required—for a loose nail in one of his horse's shoes required immediate reparation, and a blacksmith's shop, which stood by the road side under a fine old ash tree, was not to be passed. Temple stopped, and the Vulcan came out; a stout man in a leathern apron, whose face Walter knew as well as his own. One or two of the surplus population of the hamlet were lounging upon the bench under the aforesaid tree, for the chance of the cheap luxury of a little gossip.

"Where have ye been, Jem?" said the blacksmith, looking up to accost a new comer.

"Up with th' auctioneer at Levison Court."

"What then, he's comed down at last, I reckon."

"Ey—he has so—a poor half-starved looking creature he is—but dear me, there's nothing to sell, not a stitch in the house, not a parcel of old rickling chairs and tables;—and as for the

place, why, you never seed anything like the garden—all trodden, and smashed—nay, fairly now, such a spot !”

“What do you say, my man ?” asked Temple, “is Levison Court to be sold ?”

“It is so ;—the creditors have gotten it among ’em at last, and the auctioneer, Jem Hill says, has been over to-day—well, ’twould be queer, and like one of the Colonel’s old tricks, if he were to come back himself among them all.”

“He’ll find the coffin he lies in,” replied another, “too strong for tricks—I seed him buried.”

“Ay—but he’s gotten out once, they say,” observed another, a tall wandering boy, “Matty Bimson seed him striding along in Dale Park.”

“Matty Bimson’s a gomeril, and thou art another for rehearsing her nonsense ;—hie thee, fetch me the other hammer.”

The repair was presently finished, and Temple rode on.

This little dialogue, which Walter overheard, recalled much of the eagerness with which he had set out,—and he presently reached the gates of Levison Court, whence a straight approach, once flanked by majestic trees, ascended to the house, which was now bathed in the mellow light of the sun, descending in the opposite horizon without a cloud. The mansion was extensive and picturesque in its architecture. It had been built by a proud family in the times of Catholic importance, and accommodation for six monks had been attached to it ; a chapel also, and a burial ground ; the two last were still used, though the house was deserted, and a priest occupied the few rooms which had been devoted to monastic purposes. The chapel was so far incorporated with the rest of the building, that its front, with a large window, broke the long line of scalloped gables not unpleasantly—and the crucifix above looked not amiss among the tall chimney-stacks, which loaded the steep gray roof. The mansion, as well as the surrounding domain, was in wretched condition ; the noble trees had been all cut down, the hedges torn up, and the fields laid waste, and the dreariness of the scene showed all the stronger by being contrasted with the rich teeming plain which lay, spread like a map before those who looked from the portal.

But Walter turned aside, about a hundred paces before he reached the grand entrance. “This should be the way,” he said, diverging along a path which led entirely round the building, till he reached a sheltered corner, where, in virtue of his office of pastor and physician, Mr. Le Beaumont was still permitted to reside. Round this little spot were some signs of neatness, and some trace of inhabitants to be seen ; smoke rose

from a chimney, a passion flower was trained round the door, and a neat looking servant issued from a stable in an adjoining wing, and offered to take Temple's horse; informing him, at the same time, that his master was not at home, nor expected to arrive for an hour or two.

Temple, though eager to lose no time in his researches, was not sorry to be left alone for awhile, that he might freely indulge the recollections which began to crowd across his mind, thick and fast. The servant, after the old hospitable fashion, offered him such rest and refreshment as the house afforded, till its owner should return; but Walter walked out, and having found that locks and keys had long since ceased to do their office, turned through an arched gateway in the wall, to the inner court, which was surrounded on three sides by the house, and on the fourth communicated with the little cemetery by a sort of terrace with the steps so suddenly descending, that the place of graves and its melancholy sights of monuments and funerals, could not shock the inhabitants of the mansion, by being visible from its windows.

Every object was familiar. The dial, in the centre of the grass plot, to which the last wicked and whimsical possessor of the place had chained two bears for the purpose of terrifying his guests,—and, just beyond the reach of their chains, had been accustomed to deposit the helplessly intoxicated—and the window, at which he was wont to post himself, that he might lose none of their waking terrors—both remained, and it required little exercise of the imagination to conjure up the presiding spirit of these gone by orgies in visible form—especially, when shadows began to lengthen and stars to come out. Nay—Temple even fancied that, in that very window—but it could be only fancy, for that window was now closely boarded up. As the evening deepened, a feeling of intense loneliness began to creep over the watcher, and such an awe as few like to own, though the strongest must have felt it some time or other. He was thus busy with his own reflections, leaning, propped in a shadowy corner of the quadrangle, when a step upon the flagged esplanade which run round it, made him start. It was the Priest, who had returned a little earlier than he was expected, and had lost no time in coming out to find his visitor. A fine old man he was, with a high massy forehead scantily crowned with hair of the most perfectly silver hue, and something in his manner to inspire confidence as well as respect. He accosted Temple with the condescending dignity of one who speaks to an inferior, and invited him to return to the house, and declare his business.

Mr. Le Beaumont led the way to the neat little parlour, hum-



bly furnished,—with the exception of a few choice books, and a Madonna in an ebony frame above the chimney piece, and Walter cast off his heavy thread-bare coat, and slouch hat;—untied his hair, and removed with his handkerchief as much of the paint upon his face as he could, before the slow country servant girl had brought in candles and the tea-tray. He then turned round, and confronted the Priest, whose countenance underwent an immediate change of expression from mild civility to aversion, amounting almost to horror. But he constrained himself strongly, and only said, “It is long since we have met, Mr. Temple, and you must excuse me. May I ask the object of your visit?”

Temple bowed meekly in return to this scanty, almost severe welcome:—“I deserve that you should thus regard me,” said he, in a tone of deep feeling—“and yet I had hoped that you might have heard that I am somewhat different now from Colonel Levison’s companion and tool, whom you had such good reason to hate and repel.”

“Sit down, Sir,” said the old man, unconsciously softened by his humility of manner,—“I am hasty—but why this disguising? I do not like it. If you *are* changed from what you were when we last met, you are welcome here.”

“You have not then, heard, that I was established as a merchant in——?”

“No—I go rarely to any town,—and never from home when I can help it;—and see few, save those of my own flock.”

“Why then,” said Temple, brightening, “I have a longer tale to tell than I thought. You must not refuse to hear me to an end. I have sought you, in all good faith and honesty, to ask your counsel and assistance,—and this disguise—you shall hear everything.”

“After tea,” replied Mr. Le Beaumont, with more urbanity than before; for there was a sincerity in Walter’s manner enough to obliterate any prejudices or remembrances.—“You have ridden hard. Did you come all the way on horseback?”

“I did.”

“Then you must be tired as well as hungry;—and so am I. We will eat and drink first, and then discuss graver matters.”

The Priest himself had been absent on a long and harassing ride, and was glad of the refreshment of his favourite meal; and his hospitality cancelled his first coldness, if not incivility of manner. But all the while they sate at table, Temple’s thoughts could not help wandering from the easy conversation of his host, who could be the man of society when he pleased, though at his heart he was as simple as a child,—and his eyes

ever and anon strayed out of the room, and fixed themselves upon the familiar objects in the court without, which were now faintly displayed by the light of the rising moon.

"It is of no use," said Mr. Le Beaumont, when he had thrice addressed Walter, without receiving an answer, "it is of no use to talk of anything but the past. I see where your thoughts are; and mine have not kept pace with my words. What have you to tell me?"

"It is impossible to sit where I sit, and forget what has been," replied Walter,—“and the more so, from the business concerning which I have sought you. I belong to another church than your own,—but you are a pious man, Sir, and I can trust you. Will you be pleased to keep what suspicions or communications I may have to impart to you, with as much secrecy, as if they were delivered by one of your own flock, at confession?"

"I will," replied the Priest seriously;—"presuming that such a compliance involves nothing wrong on my part."

"I have reason," said Temple, fixing his eyes steadily upon Mr. Le Beaumont, "to believe in the possibility of Colonel Levison's being yet alive. May I ask you, Sir, whether such a suspicion has ever crossed your mind?"

The old man coloured:—but it was the natural consequence of being subjected to the inquisition of Walter's keen eyes.

He replied immediately, "No, Mr. Temple, I am startled by your abruptness—but the thing is *impossible*. What has excited your suspicions?—mere reports?—I know that such have been flying about among the timid peasantry hereabouts,—but the thing is impossible. I performed the burial service over him;—he lies in yonder chapel, as you may have heard."

"You did:—and it is therefore from you that I seek a solution of my doubts. I will tell you why I must know the truth,—what events of consequence hang on this question's being satisfactorily decided; and then leave it to your conscience, as a man, and minister of the gospel, whether you can hold back any *opinion* which may throw light upon so dark a matter."

"I trust," replied the Priest, a little stiffly, "that you will not mention any private affairs of your own, for the mere purpose of insuring my truthfulness."

Walter hastened to apologise, and briefly told him the events with which the reader is already acquainted;—owned to him the delicate situation in which he stood, with respect to Mrs. Levison,—(the Priest shook his head at the mention of her name) and mentioned the circumstance which had refreshed his suspicions;—not forgetting the midnight disturbances at Dale

Hall, and the popular rumour, which must have *some* foundation. Mr. Le Beaumont heard him to an end with grave attention.

"I cannot wonder, after what you have told me, at your anxiety to clear up a point which concerns you so much; and I may confess to you that the sum of the circumstances which you have mentioned, is enough to alarm any one. But I cannot for an instant allow them any value;—I have seen his corpse."

"You have!" exclaimed Temple, eagerly.

"I saw his corpse, during the days when it lay in state at Levison Court."

"Forgive me, Sir, if I question you closer on a matter which is of such serious importance. Did you see the features?—Was the body in the coffin?"

The Priest hesitated for a moment.

"I did—and yet I did not—that is, I had such a repugnance to gaze upon the face, that although I uncovered it—excuse me, Sir, on this subject,—the sight was too horrible! You have doubtless been told the manner of his death."

"And you have then no doubt that you saw the features of the dead Colonel Levison?"

"None—not the least—why should I? what end could such a deception answer?"

"To escape from justice."

"But might he not have fled the kingdom?"

"He might have his reasons for wishing to remain here concealed; and you do not know his nature as well as I do. You forget that if there was a thing to be done, he would find out some crooked way, which it would have never occurred to any one else to imagine, and enjoy it for its very difficulty; and when I remember the horrible threats of revenge which he ventured at our last meeting, because I was resolute in emancipating myself from his power,—the thought of his lurking about for some secret end of darkness,—it would make me mad!—And then you see that I am not the only one to whom the idea has occurred."

"I know," replied Mr. Le Beaumont, "that the rumour has not yet died away; and our people, from living in a secluded part of the county, and one peopled with legends, are, perhaps, somewhat credulous. But, Sir, as we are upon the subject, who shall say that they are not right in fancying that the Almighty for his own purposes does sometimes allow the spirits of the departed to re-appear in the scenes of their former exploits?—and how would you put such a notion to rest, unless you could examine the grave?—and even that,—so long a time has elapsed,—would be hardly satisfactorily."

"You have come to the very point!" exclaimed Walter eagerly. "Will you permit me to make such an examination?"

Mr. Le Beaumont shuddered; and a strong expression of sick disgust spread itself over his features.

"Dear Sir, consider the stake!" cried Temple, his vehemence every moment increasing. "I am about to leave England, under circumstances in which doubt is painful—*may* be fatal. I know the fearfulness of what I propose, but it is the only alternative."

"But what satisfaction can you hope for? Corruption?"—

"His hands," said Temple, in a very low voice—"You may remember that the fourth finger of the left was shot off; and I am sure that I should know—I *must* know whether he be alive or not! It is a work of necessity. I pray—I intreat of you to permit me,—you have the keys of the vault;—do not withstand me, as you would avoid being answerable for any mischief which is yet to come."

"I cannot!" replied the Priest, in a voice of the utmost repugnance;—"it is *too* dreadful!"

"Think of what may be more dreadful!—if he *should* be yet alive, waiting for some moment in which he may involve us all in ruin? It is so easy to put the question to rest, once and for ever."

"Dare you go alone?"

"Dare!—I would wish for a witness—but"—

"And it is not my duty," said Le Beaumont, "if it *must* be so, to shrink from accompanying you. We will, then, when all is quiet:—and yet there are very few, who like to think of entering the chapel after sunset, alone."

"What?—have you too been disturbed?"

"Let us not speak of these things," replied the Priest nervously;—"and may Heaven pardon us, if you have persuaded me to sanction what is amiss!—But when I think of the wickedness of that man,—and how his name haunts the country for miles round,—I confess to you that a strange fear creeps over me."

"Had we not better proceed at once?—The longer it is delayed, the more difficult it will be to carry it through. If you feel unequal to such a task,—I have no dread of going alone."

"No, no!" muttered the Priest, "I will attend you. You will require—wait awhile, and I will return to you presently."

Walter was left alone for a few moments, to look out into the quadrangle, every object in which was now clearly displayed as the moon rose above the house-top. His excited fancy again and again caught glimpses of some dark object stealing among its formal clumps of evergreens, and moaning sounds in every

rush of air which passed. Something touched him upon his shoulder; it was the Priest, who bore a bunch of large keys in his hand, a dark lantern, chisels, and a turn-screw.

"Walk softly," whispered he:—"we must not alarm any one."

The vestry of the chapel at Levison Court opened directly from the Priest's house, through a narrow door covered with dark cloth, and again communicated with the Chapel by another door, almost as small, which, when closed, had the appearance of a panel in the wall. The building, though small, was very highly enriched with decorations. Close to the altar on either side of it was a large gothic arch, closed with gilded open tracery. Beneath the one to the right, was the seat in which the family belonging to the mansion had been accustomed to attend their devotions. It was garnished with faded escutcheons and tarnished with velvet cushions, and looked all the gloomier, from being half seen by the light of one lamp, hanging low before the altar, which was never allowed to expire. The arch, on the left, was the entrance to a sort of antechamber to the vault where the bodies of the family were deposited;—and here are many mouldering hatchments, and tattered banners which had floated over some Syrian battle-field in the days of the crusades.

When the first railing was passed, the Priest uncovered the lantern.—"This is the worse lock," said he, applying the key to the door:—"Hold the light,—Sancta Maria!—what is moving the shadow yonder?—did you hear?"

Walter put down the screen over the light, and looked keenly, breathlessly out into the chapel, so faintly illuminated by the pale moon-shine. But there was nothing—nothing to be heard, save the throbbing of his own pulse, and the shivering of his companion, who presently exclaimed, in a tone of the utmost horror, "There again!—did you not hear something laugh! Let us go, I entreat of you,—let us go at once."

"There is nothing," replied Walter, in a low voice;—"let us go in at once, and it will soon be over.—Give me the key;—we are here for no evil purpose, and Heaven is over all.—So—it gives way. Remain there, and let me go alone."

"O, no, no!—I must be with you," answered the Priest, over whom terror was every minute gaining stronger and stronger mastery. "Holy Mary forgive us if we are doing wrong! Yonder he lies,—the one covered with black velvet—I cannot bear to look!—Here is—but, Jesu! you will not need it,—the lid has been loosened!"

Walter took the lantern from his companion's powerless hand, a step through the low dark vault brought him close to

the object of his search. It was even as the Priest had said ;—the lid of the coffin in which the remains of the godless Colonel Levison had been deposited, *had* been removed, it was clear, and imperfectly replaced. Temple had never before felt the overwhelming presence of Death, as now,—when he stood by the side of the dust of his enemy,—his tempter, now motionless in the sleep and corruption of the tomb. The Priest had withdrawn from his side, and was muttering prayers for the soul of the dead, and for the protection of all good angels, with his rosary in his hands. Walter laid his hand upon the coffin, almost expecting to feel something tremble beneath,—lifted it, with a desperate resolution. The grave clothes had been disturbed, it was evident, though they were now mouldering fast. He put them aside, with unutterable loathing—another effort—one steady look,—and doubt would be at an end. The face had lost all recognisable form and character,—the arms had been severed at the shoulder, and were both wanting !

“ Did you laugh ? ” cried the Priest suddenly :—“ Sancta Maria ora pro nobis ! ”

“ Come away ! ” cried Walter hastily, replacing the coffin-lid, and trembling with sudden terror ; “ Come away, it is all in vain ! ”—he expected to see his companion fall lifeless before him.—What his disappointment and vexation were may be imagined. There was nothing whereon to found any conclusion. How they left the vault, and made their way through the dim chapel, to the cheerful fire, and the lighted room, neither of them could ever tell.

It was miserable to be compelled to leave Mr. Le Beaumont in the state of stupor into which he fell, when the adventure was fairly accomplished,—but it was necessary—and sick at heart, and utterly dispirited, Walter was compelled to resume his disguise, and depart. The determination of his spirit may be judged by his being able to undertake a lonely midnight ride through a district haunted by remembrances, after having been so powerfully affected by the chapel scene, and when he was recalled again and again to the chamber of corruption, by its odour, which, whether real or fancied, did not leave him till the fresh sea breeze had blown over him for many days.

## PART VI.

## THE VOYAGE—AND WHAT FOLLOWED.

MRS. LEVISON's last preparations were successfully made;—her last tears of lamentation, so inconsistent with her former professions of delight in the prospect of leaving England, were shed—the last anxious consultation held between Mr. Arnold and Temple.—Doctor Goodrich had taken leave of his friend, with “Good-bye,—I suppose I shall see you no more as a single man:”—hands were shaken—handkerchiefs waved—and the coast of old England faded from the view of the passengers on board the Arnold, as she set forth upon her voyage in prosperous majesty. She was a roomy ship, commanded by a captain, whose bold and cordial manners towards men, softened down to tenderness as often as he addressed women, together with his thousand tales of adventure, and the confidence he possessed in his own good fortune, and the sea-worthiness of the vessel he commanded, were enough to tempt any one in strong health and spirits to take a cruise with him, and to reconcile the most ailing and dispirited of hypochondriacs to the chances and privations of a voyage. Walter rejoiced in the choice he made; more especially when he considered the delicate and anxious charge he had undertaken.

The full extent of this delicacy and anxiety was not revealed to him till land had long disappeared—till Mrs. Levison had become so far seasoned to the world of waters, as to be able to appear upon deck. Her first greeting to Walter, upon issuing from the confinement of her cabin, was as affectionate as the child's who meets his indulgent friend after a short separation,—and she made haste to appropriate him to herself. He was to read to her as she sat upon deck—to support her when she chose to walk—to be the patient listener to all her ebullitions of feeling, varying in form, but monotonous in substance. She was sure that he would think for her—anticipate all her little caprices—and there was no one on board to dispute her claim—her only fellow passengers besides Walter, being a surgeon, who had been broiled and baked in almost every one of the Tropics, and was now on his way to receive his last and hottest roasting in the West Indies, and a poor faded woman of a lower class, whose husband held some small situation under government in Jamaica, and had left her in the care of her

father. That father was dead, and the orphan was on her way to join her husband, and with her, a little girl, a pale flax-haired child, with a melancholy eye, and a mournful smile, which told how the pleasant time of childhood had been darkened by Poverty, "that weary thing."

Mrs. Levison had nothing to fear from these,—and, though she would have wept at the heartless injustice of such a speech, had any one told her that she felt perfectly happy, she was at all events *nearer* to that state, than she had been for many long years. She wanted to be all and everything to some one person, at once tender and gallant. She had found such a one, and was placed in circumstances most favourable to enjoying uninterruptedly the full value of the possession.

All this tenderness, this confidence so certain of return, was most perplexing to Walter, in proportion as it was delightful. It is true, that he had been assigned as second husband to Mrs. Levison from the first hour of their meeting,—that the Arnolds had countenanced the report, feeling how useful it might be to their credit to be able to talk of Mr. Arnold's young friend and partner, who was going to be married to a lady with a hundred thousand pounds of her own,—and that this arrangement of their voyage to Jamaica in company, made their connexion so establish a thing, that Rumour, satiated with certainty, had started off on some other tack, (be it remembered that we are on the sea.) But, for all this, Walter was far from having reached the decisive point before they left England,—farther still, after that hurried visit to Levison Court.

In the first place, till the misgivings which haunted his mind were satisfactorily silenced, the idea of his marrying Mrs. Levison could not be harboured;—in the second, he had secretly resolved to make his fortune sure before he sought the hand of any woman,—this being only a part of the scheme of life which he had so rigidly laid down for himself;—and lastly, grievous as it may be to admit it,—the perfect openness of his companion—the trustful reliance upon his sympathy which left nothing for him to elicit or discover—though perfectly distinct from boldness—was a little too *full-blown* to attract his love. He was daily more and more sobered down from the cavalier into the friend,—though she was blind to this change; and, intent upon securing sympathy, overlooked what one a shade more artificial would have taken into the account, the chances of conquest. If she loved him, as a woman loves the man she must and ought to marry—it was, as yet, unknown to herself. In fact, such a discovery must have been, at once, fatal to her daily habits of seeking his society, calling for his assistance, and consulting with him on her future plans.



Her eyes were fast—not unsealed—but unintroduced into a condition to admit of their opening—by her feeling discomfort on witnessing the notice which Temple began to take of little Annie Bakewell. He loved to seat the child upon his knee, and hear her innocent wonder “How strange everything was,—and when should they come to any trees?”—and her talk of how she had been used to ride on a donkey, which was called Duffel, when she lived with grandpapa, and how she had cried when bad men took it away to be sold.” He delighted to hold her over the ship’s side, and bid her look down upon the busy deep, with its pearly waters always changing,—and strange fish gambolling in the vessel’s wake; and she was afraid of nothing when he took care of her,—and when she was poorly, he would amuse her for hours, and wrap her up so warmly in his cloak, and talk to her softly, while he held her little hand, about the palm trees and the beautiful birds of the island, to which they were bound. Every one on board loved Annie; even the grim Scotch surgeon, whose heart had grown leathery by being knocked about the world for the last five and twenty years, would toss her up in his long lank arms, and then hunt in his capacious pockets for a lozenge or a fig;—but Walter loved her most;—and it was a love which Mrs. Levison could not understand. She would even sometimes go so far as to hint, that shipboard was not the proper place for children: and though, at a word, she would have lavished any sum of money upon Annie Bakewell, she could not willingly spare from herself as much of Temple’s time and thoughts as were given to the child; and showed, in a thousand indirect ways, that it found no favour in her eyes, that his good stars should have sent him such a toy to vary the monotony of a voyage.

This jealousy, to call things by their right names, could not be long concealed, even from a man so little vain as Walter. It troubled him greatly:—it occurred to him, sometimes, that the simplest way of putting their intercourse upon a right footing, would be to make her partaker of his suspicions,—and then again, he remembered how delicate her health was, and how the bare retrospect of the days of her married life was, at any time, sufficient to throw her into a pitiable state of agitation. Were he to destroy the small portion of happiness she was permitted to enjoy, it might cost her her reason, or her life. He was therefore obliged, painful as it was, to withdraw himself gradually from that close communion they had at first maintained, and rather subject himself to the charge of unkindness and inconstancy, than tear away the veil, upon the preservation of which her peace of mind depended.

Meanwhile, they proceeded on their voyage without any

tolerance or obstacle. Scarcely one day was marked by either squally enough to merit insertion as such in the Arl's log book;—the perils and privations of the sea were as unknown,—and its novelty not wholly exhausted. Mrs. Ison spent a great part of every day upon deck, and averred the ocean breezes had already been of such service to her, she could sing without feeling any evil consequences. Her harp, therefore, was often put in requisition, though its use came almost agonizing to her, when she perceived that the listener she cared to attract was less constantly at her side formerly. She was sitting one evening, much later than usual, in her most melancholy mood; Temple was standing at a distance, with his arms folded, watching the spot in the heavens where the sun had gone down in the midst of clouds such a varied gorgeousness as are never seen in our north-latitudes. The little girl was playing about his feet. Mrs. Ison thought that he was utterly careless of her music,—little wing that every note of the lay she sung made its way to his heart.

We sail along—we sail along—  
 And straight our course we hold  
 Toward islands full of jewel caves  
 And sands that shine as gold;  
 And palms through which, like fairy plumes,  
 The gentle south-wind strays,  
 And flowers, beneath whose weight of stars,  
 The ancient forests blaze.  
 But what care I for that bright shore,  
 Or flower, or gem, or tree?  
 A lonely heart—a lonely heart  
 Is best upon the sea.

We sail along—we sail along  
 Across the Ocean foam,  
 And night and day, the mariners gay,  
 Are singing songs of home;  
 The old man of his faithful wife,  
 And children's eager smile;  
 The young man of the dark-eyed girls  
 That haunt that fairy isle.  
 No more—no more!—on that bright shore  
 Are none to welcome me;—  
 A lonely heart—a lonely heart  
 Is best upon the sea!

She ceased:—and Walter was beside her.

"I think," said he, "that I never heard you sing that song before."

She hastily unslung her guitar from her neck, and rose;—"I did not think that you took so much notice of my songs *now*," replied she, with a quivering lip.

"Nay,—you do me injustice;—with only one musician on board—and such a one, I must be worse than deaf to neglect her!"

"Temple, I cannot bear this tone, so light, so indifferent. What has come between us, that you speak to me as if we were merely heartless, common acquaintance?—that you—" she burst into a passion of tears.

"You have sung too much," said he soothingly; "I must prohibit any more such exercise of your voice, if the consequences are your being so nervous and unwell;—come, you shall go below, the dew is beginning to fall. Just take one parting look at that splendid cluster of stars, and then go down." He led her to the companion ladder, while she repeated, "Go down!—Heaven knows I am sunk low enough already; I wish I were laid below the sea!"

This last exhibition of feeling admitted of no misinterpretation. After she had retired to her own cabin, Walter paced the deck for an hour, in no enviable frame of mind. If there be one charge which is painful above another, it is the being blamed for fickleness and unkindness towards the friendless;—and most distressing is it, because very often, the party accused is placed in circumstances under which he cannot defend himself. It was impossible to explain the causes of this alteration of manner, which had given Mrs. Levison so much pain, without increasing the difficulties of their situation, by showing her that Walter had interpreted her confidence to mean something so far beyond common good understanding, that it was necessary to put an end to it at once and for ever. He walked to and fro, busily revolving these and other perplexities in his mind, which was already sufficiently burdened with the cares of commerce, until a strange weariness seemed to come over him, and, throwing himself down upon a sail, he fell into a sort of reverie, hearing, without noting it, the wash of the water and the dull, droning voice of the man at the helm. By degrees, the sailors, who had been gathered together in little knots, telling stories while they mended their clothes, or finished their evening's allowance of grog—dropped off—and everything was still.

How long he lay in that waking dream, he was not aware. He was roused from it by loud shrieks from the furthest end of the deck,—shrill cries of "Help! help! for God's sake!" He sprung up immediately, and hastened towards the spot whence the voice had proceeded, though it was so

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dark that he could see nothing, and, in his haste, stumbled over a rope. The outcry had disturbed some one or two others of the crew, and when he reached the mizen mast, he perceived that Annie's mother was leaning against it, surrounded by the startled sailors, and sobbing, as if her heart would break.

"Why now, Mrs. Bakewell, what is the matter?" said he, approaching her gently; "stand away, my men—and let me talk to her a little, you see she is sadly frightened!—what is to be done?—who has hurt you?"

"O Sir!" cried she passionately, "it is that Mr. Vial!—he lets me have no peace, and though he knows that I am a married woman, is always running after me, and he says he is sure that I shall find my husband dead, when we get to Kingston—poor George! Heaven in its mercy forbid!—and he was here just now—and so rude!"

"But what brought you upon deck at such an hour, Mrs. Bakewell?" said Walter, who was resolved to sift the matter to the bottom.

"I had been washing a few little things of Annie's, Sir, and forgot to take them in,—and he was after me!—and he said, Sir, at last—that if my husband was living, why, his mistress was no better, for that her husband was alive, for all she was going to be married to you, Sir."

Walter commanded his surprise; "Well but, you see he is gone now—I will talk to him, and take care you shall be persecuted no more; and if that is not enough, we will speak to the Captain; you had better go quietly down now—I promise you, you shall be molested no more."

"But to think," continued poor Mrs. Bakewell, still weeping abundantly, "that he should tell me that my poor George is dead!—poor fellow!—and as if I would look at him, if I were a widow ten times over."

"Well—well—never mind what he says, he was perhaps a little in liquor; I will call him to account the first thing in the morning. Come, this is not air for a woman to be upon deck in—you had better go down now."

With much persuasion, the affronted and fretful woman was induced to go and cry out the remainder of her grief, in her berth; and Walter resumed his walk, with new matter of conjecture. Vial knew that Colonel Levison was yet living!—could he have written that anonymous letter to Isabella? and, if so, was he merely keeping the rumour alive for some purpose of his own?—Walter had always strongly disliked this same Vial—and henceforward resolved to watch him narrowly, as well as to subject him to a severe catechizing on the morrow.

With respect to the catechizing, his plans were entirely tra-

versed. Scarcely had he risen, when the suspected person made his appearance in his cabin, and requested an audience. His air was confused, and his countenance penitent; "If you please, Sir," said he, most respectfully, "I believe that I drank a little too much last night,—will you be so good as not to mention it before my mistress this time—she would never look over it."

Temple eyed him very severely. There was nothing affected, nothing displeasing in the manner of his apology. "You should find yourself some employment on shipboard," said Walter, "better than getting drunk, and teasing a respectable woman. Can you write?"

"O yes, Sir," said the man, eagerly producing a neatly kept account-book, "tolerably well." Walter cast his eye over it. The writing was certainly far different from the characters of the anonymous billet. He was now somewhat at fault how to pursue his inquiry; "Vial," said he, "did you attend your late master's funeral?"

"Master?—if you please, Sir, I never was in service before; and have only lived with my mistress for these last two years."

"Well—you may go; let me hear of such disturbances no more, or I shall feel it my duty to mention them to Mrs. Levison."

There was nothing more to be said, no further pretext for inquiry; but this fresh irritation of Walter's suspicions, increased his circumspection of conduct towards his fair and delicate friend, who wept and wondered,—though she complained no more. The sickness of his playmate furnished him as an excuse, in part, for withdrawing some little of his attention. A month ago, he could hardly have believed that he could be made to take so much interest in any child. But it was astonishing what a universal sensation was excited by Annie's illness. This appeared in the form of complete prostration of strength, and a longing for the things of land, which, uttered in her simple childish language, was most touching; she was, however, a very model of patience,—most affectionately grateful to every one. The surgeon prescribed his best for her; the Captain declared, with something like moisture in his eyes, that she should want for nothing; Temple was unwearied in carrying her about wherever she wished to feel the breathing of the fresh air (she had ceased to take pleasure in the sea, and its changing sights); but their kindness was bestowed in vain. She was to die,—and with words upon her lips of the home in England which she had left, and his hand held firmly between her own, she fell asleep upon her mother's knee. She awaked no more! so easily did her spirit pass, that no one could guess the precise

moment of its departure.—She was buried in the sea just a fortnight before the Arnold arrived in Kingston.

And now came the moment when Mrs. Levison must separate from her friend and conductor, whose care had never diminished in substance, however much it had appeared to have done so in seeming. It was necessary for Temple immediately to repair to different parts of the island; and she was presently settled in a handsome house of her own, with suites of apartments and retinues of slaves, for the first time in her life, to feel the full worth of her large fortune. The society of such a woman was sure to be courted, and, as for the present, her health seemed to be approaching a state of restoration. Walter left her, —perfectly satisfied in his mind that the step she had taken promised well for her happiness,—to devote all his energy to the furtherance of his views. Their parting was full of feeling, and for many days, the lady refused to be comforted.

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Three months passed over like a dream. In the course of that time Walter's exertions had been most amazing; and, in spite of the trial of a change of climate, achieved so much in the way of collecting remittances, and inspiring confidence by his presence, that he felt relieved in his mind, as to the issue of his endeavours, should the English house have done its part, and wrote to Mr. Arnold, full of hope and confidence. He had been repeatedly warned by experienced residents, to spare himself, but he was too eagerly engaged to have time to think of their counsel; and the consequence of all this violent exertion of body and mind was a violent fever, which attacked him on his return to Kingston.

He arrived late at night, in the midst of a drenching shower of rain. Before morning, he was insensibly delirious, and it was a blessed thing that his labours were successfully completed, for it was many weeks from that day before he was conscious enough to put a question or to frame a reply: and during that time, his sensations were those of indefinite pain, and of the presence of a phantasmagoria of ugly confused images; such as the constant ascension of ladders, whose summit he was never to reach; the entangling distress of an unlimited sea of figures unceasingly fluctuating before his eyes, which he was to reduce to a regular calculation; or, worst of all, the misery of the face which he hated, beyond all others, appearing in all the ghastly lividness of the tomb before him, fixing constantly upon him the same wrathful Medusa-like stare,—with the thousand other phantom torments which belong particularly to the bed of fever.

Slowly, very slowly, did this chaos pass away, and he be-

came somewhat calmer, and more conscious of his own identity, though so weak, that he could not raise his hand to his head without assistance. He had scarcely reached that most distressing point of convalescence, at which the invalid begins to trouble himself about the matters which are passing in the world around him, before he is strong enough to consider them collectedly, or even to be aware of the presence of the person by whom he had been so carefully tended, when one day a conversation, close to his ear, impressed him for the moment, and was not, like all other previous incidents, forgotten as soon as it passed.

"So it is you, Mr. Vial?—and what makes you come here again?"

"My mistress has sent me to inquire how Mr. Temple is."

"And she contents herself with sending! she would have come three months ago. You may tell her, that he is better—I wish she would choose some other messenger."

"Why, Mrs. Bakewell, what objection can you possibly have to me?"

"I don't like your coming up stairs, so forward;—are you not afraid of catching the fever? and whenever you are here, he might know it, for he always tosses, and seems so disturbed. There—Heaven bless him! he could not do as much a week ago! he will get through—Surgeon Huntley said so from the first."

"Afraid of catching the fever!" replied Vial, "I was well seasoned to such things years ago;—no—I was going to offer to take your place, and watch him for an hour. It would do you good to breathe the fresh air; you are grown as thin as a skeleton since you have been nursing him."

Temple declared, upon his recovery, that he had never known such a moment of deadly terror as the one in which he dreaded being left to Vial's tender mercies. He was instantaneously relieved by Mrs. Bakewell's "Thank you, Mr. Vial, I could not be easy to leave him;—it is little enough that my husband and I can do for him, when I think how good he was to that dear little Annie, who is now an angel in Heaven—if there ever was one. I will trust him to nobody else, that when he gets well, he may know—"

"And make you some handsome recompence"—

"Keep your sneers to yourself, Mr. Vial; or save them for your mistress, who, after all her running after Mr. Temple, is going to make a fool of herself, if all tales are true. Well, a fine handful he will have with her money. And now, go away, if you do not mean to make me angry; and don't come near the

house again—for your company is desired by none in it. I wonder that you dare—”

Her voice grew shriller as it followed the unwelcome visitor out of the chamber, and down stairs. Whilst he was trying to put their dialogue together again, and resolving to question Mrs. Bakewell, (who, it appeared, had been his guardian angel,) he fell asleep.

His active nurse was sitting patiently by his bed-side, on the next day, when he suddenly opened his eyes, and, in a very weak voice, said :—

“That is you, Mrs. Bakewell, is it not?”

“Bless you! and do you know me at last? Why, I declare, you look quite sensible! I told the man who wanted to measure you for your coffin, the other day, that he was here a week too soon,—and he is dead himself since!”

“Have I been so ill as that?”

“Lie still, and do not fatigue yourself; you are better, and will pick up your crumbs directly, Surgeon Huntley says; and you shall read all the great heap of letters from England, which my husband keeps locked up in his desk; no one else has looked at ’em, for I took them out of Mr. Vial’s hands, as he was tossing them over. He is civiler grown since his wife’s death, and he is going to marry the tawny woman. Now go to sleep again, do; Surgeon Huntley says that you are to be kept ever so quiet.”

“I do not want to sleep!—Tell me something more.—Mrs. Levison!”

“Don’t ask about her!”

“What is the matter!—I will know. Has she been ill?—is she—”

“O dear! O dear! why *cannot* you be quiet, and give over fatiguing yourself? She is better than you or me at this minute; but—”

“But what! do tell me, dear, good Mrs. Bakewell!”

“They say that she is going to be married.”

“Married!” screamed Walter, springing up into a sitting posture, with a vehemence which terrified his attendant; “tell me all—at once!—I must get up—where are my clothes?—Get out of the room—I must dress—I must see her immediately!” but, as he spoke, he sunk back again, absolutely gibbering with faintness.

“Do—do lie still! and you shall hear all about it; and then rest, won’t you? ’Tis a young Portuguese, they say, whom she is going to marry; and he has not a sixpence in the world, nor a shirt to his back, I dare say;—and yet good enough for her!”



"You are inventing tales to amuse me," said Temple: "I cannot believe it; it was but two months ago—"

"Two months! you have been lying here nearly that long. It is true, upon my word; why should I tease you? you, who was so good to my poor little Annie!" and she held up her apron to her eyes; "but, if you do not believe me, ask Surgeon Huntley. Why, it is the talk of all the town, how Mr. Castro is with her from morning till night—riding with her, singing with her:—no wonder at him wishing to marry the fortune! and she won't believe a word amiss of him. But, dear me, you look tired and faint. Here,—I will run and fetch you a drink in a minute." Before she returned, her patient had fainted.

The news which thus reached Walter was indeed true; and, for a wonder, neither caricatured nor exaggerated. It was true, that during Walter's mercantile journey Mrs. Levison had mixed a good deal in the best general society which Kingston and its neighbourhood afforded; and that she had insensibly learned to prefer the homage which was paid to her whenever she appeared, to the selfish and secret pleasure of lonely tears and lonely musings; that she had met Mr. Castro, at that precise moment—of all others the most critical—when she had begun to compare Temple's coldness, with the gallant and almost tender attention lavished upon her in every other quarter; and had satisfied her own doubts as to its cause, by attributing it to a deficiency of those delicate shades of refinement which, in her heart of hearts, she prized more than nobler and bolder features of character. Castro was a true hero of romance—superbly handsome, animated, gentle;—one who waited not for her looks, but seemed to enter into and appreciate her most impalpable fancies intuitively, with almost chivalrous respect, and yet with that certain degree of confidence so impossible to repress by smile or frown;—one, who in sober truth, although pennyless, was fascinated by the sweetness of her face and manner, before he was stricken by *les beaux yeux de sa casette*.

Her mind was soon so entirely occupied by this new interest, that there was little room for anything else. The remembrance of past sufferings was entirely swept away by delightful anticipations; and her health kept pace with her happiness: and while Temple was suffering the dreamy agonies of fever, she was daily increasing in beauty, and losing some of her lately threatening symptoms. Thus it was, and from no deficiency of regard, that her inquiries after the sick had been made by deputy. She gave herself up to the pleasing dream, with such entire purpose of heart, as ere long to become the object of

popular talk. She was now, she hoped, to be compensated for all that she had suffered, forgetting,—poor Sybil!—that it is in the heart of man where happiness dwells; and so that the fortress is well kept, it is comparatively of little consequence how fiercely the out-works are besieged.

She was sitting, one evening, before an open lattice, wreathed round with creeping plants in luxurious profusion,—Castro was at her feet; they had sung and talked, and were now silent, from that fulness of heart which is too engrossing to allow of speech,—when a step was heard in the ante-chamber—a feeble and unsteady step, and, after one or two unanswered knockings upon the door, it was opened softly. Both lady and gentleman looked round, angry that any one should intrude upon them, in what each felt to be the sweetest moment of life,—when, ghastly as a corpse, with his manly figure shrunk to a trembling thinness, Temple entered slowly and unassuredly. No one that had witnessed the first meeting with Mrs. Levison which has been described, would have recognised either of the two now. She had cast her mourning aside, and was dressed in white, with a few rose-coloured trumpet flowers in her hair, and a bouquet of jessamine on her bosom,—looking younger than she really was; he, pale, spectral, and haggard, with his dim eyes, and his livid complexion, might have passed for a man of fifty, so strangely had a few months wrought.

“Why, Mr. Temple!” exclaimed she, eagerly springing from the sofa, “I am delighted to see you abroad again! Castro, bring that easy chair hither; you are no stranger to Mr. Temple, Paul;—and you, Mr. Temple, sit down;—I forget that I should have introduced my friends to each other—no matter; Castro, leave us for a few moments, I will call you directly—leave us;—nay, my friend, you are not jealous;—go—you know I will be obeyed, at least for the next few weeks!”

The last words were whispered, but loud enough for Walter to hear, and Castro retired reluctantly, casting looks of as much anger as annoyance, upon the intruder. He was at last gone, and Mrs. Levison looked at Temple till her beautiful eyes were filled with tears.

Poor—poor Walter—how ill you have been! and I never heard of it, nor even that you had returned to Kingston, till Mr. Huntley told me that he hardly knew whether he could bring you round or not. Did you think I had forgotten you? Do not speak yet; you are hardly strong enough yet to come out. Believe me, that whatever changes my situation may undergo, I shall never forget your kindness.”

“I have heard—” he began in a hoarse and broken voice.

She blushed deeply; and, as she beheld the agitation which

cut short his words, the idea—"then he has loved me after all!" darted across her mind like a flash of lightning, with a sudden and keen delight, in spite of her being engaged to her new lover—so inconstant are the feelings of one so facile in character as she was! She looked down, and her concern to see him so embarrassed was chequered with this secret satisfaction as she replied:

"I cannot feign, Temple; what you may have heard is true;—I am going to be married."

Walter gasped with misery, and the dew stood large as pearls upon his sallow forehead.

"Do not say so, for God's sake! you have not passed your word—you are not engaged? Tell me anything but that, I entreat you!"

There was no time for double dealing. She looked down again, and her lips moved, though no words were audible: her confusion increased in proportion to his impetuosity.

"I am too late!—too late!" cried he, "I should have spoken long before this time, but I feared—and I hoped that I should succeed. I must speak now—I *must* give utterance to my secret. Hear me only this once, and pardon me; and then, if you will,—never see me more!"

"No!" replied she, rising, and gathering all her strength, while her cheek became ashy pale with emotion. "I must not listen to this; what I have told you is a settled thing, and past recall. If it give you pain, Temple, be sure that I must be grieved also; but I dare not trifle with you for an instant. I shall be married within the month."

"O God!" cried he, clasping his hands, and hiding his face between them, "that it should have come to this!"

"Leave me!—leave me! I cannot bear this! If you are so much distressed, why has been all the vacillation in your conduct which gave me such pain? why," continued she, her tone growing more and more tremulous, "such coldness as you showed towards the latter part of our voyage?—if it be, as you would say, surely you could not have been deceived—I am too open—surely you must have known that there *was* a time—"

"O hear me, lady!" exclaimed Walter, stunned by language so full of emotion, "or I shall not be able to tell it you! You are—you have—nay, you *must* stay—mistaken the cause of—of my present agitation!"

"Mistaken!" repeated she, as much displeased as surprised, "this is very strange! what else can there be between us which should affect you so violently? You terrify me;—do not—I am stronger than I was, but I have not forgotten *everything*, as some people think."

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"Nothing but the possibility of such an event could have wrung my secret from me ;—but I *must* go on.—Has your fancy never suggested a possibility which might—might put any *second marriage* out of the question?"

She looked bewilderedly hither and thither, without the remotest idea of his meaning.

"This is dreadful!" exclaimed Walter, "cannot you imagine? cannot you spare me the misery of speaking it out? Have you never heard that it has happened that people have connived at spreading false rumours of their own deaths?"

She had fixed her eyes upon him, as if she would devour every word which fell from his mouth. The meaning of his warning burst upon her at once. For a moment, she sat staring upon him, like one turned by horror into rigid marble ;—in the next, she fell back upon the sofa, in a paroxysm of violent and horrible laughter.

"A most wonderful joke!—and you expect me to believe that I am not a widow after all! Castro! Castro! Paul! (raising her voice almost to a scream) come here and help me laugh! come here! make haste, and hear what he says. Colonel Levison is alive—he is not dead!—and so you can't have me after all!"

This was even more fearful than any anguish such as Temple expected would follow the communication he felt it necessary to make. The household, alarmed by the continued shrieks of their unfortunate mistress, were in the room in a moment, while Castro was supporting her, vainly endeavouring to soothe her, or to obtain some explanation from her; and venting a thousand imprecations upon Walter for having practised upon the reason of his beloved Sybil. Temple was hardly less moved; he would have given worlds that so hideous a task should have been laid upon any other than himself; but it was now in vain to wish. The ruin had fallen, and he must abide to behold its desolation. In the midst of the universal clamour and confusion, his eye, as had once happened before, was caught by a face peeping over the shoulders of the frightened slaves, who had crowded into the apartment. The face and the sneer were Vial's.

He rushed forward to seize him, and to demand an explanation of this strange look of-pleasure, at a moment when every one else was plunged in horror; but the man had disappeared, and his arm was at that moment forcibly caught by some one behind him. It was Castro, who exclaimed furiously:

"By the Eternal One! you shall not leave this house, till you have accounted to me for what you have done!"

"When and wherever you please," replied Walter, in a tone of the deepest melancholy, "you will know the truth too soon!"

"Follow me then at once! she is in Huntley's hands, and he will summon us if he need our assistance. I will have no delay! no evasion!—we shall be undisturbed below stairs. If it be as I suppose, you shall answer for your wickedness with your life!"

"Let me go!" exclaimed Temple, proudly, shaking himself loose from the other's grasp. "I am not a thief to escape you, nor an impostor to be afraid of you. God knows that I did not seek this—"

He stopped—for another louder peal of that unnatural laughter rung through the house. Both gentlemen shuddered, and made haste out of hearing, and Castro, opening the door of a small room, said:

"Here, Sir! here—you shall tell me what all this means—what you have done to insult my friend!" and, as he spoke, he drew his sword, and laid it upon the table.

"You mistake your man, Mr. Castro," said Temple, "if you interpret the weakness of indisposition as timidity;—should there need, you might perhaps find me nearer your match than you fancy, though my arm has not yet recovered its strength. But you might have spared yourself the trouble of showing your weapon,—you will not need it to-night."

"I will have an explanation—a full and entire one!" cried Castro, striking the table furiously with his clenched hand. "If you have come hither as a rival, to disturb happiness which you were unworthy to enjoy—no—not your pale face and trembling arm shall prevent me from chastising you as you deserve!"

"You are very much in love; and, as a foreigner, do not understand the bounds within which we are used to confine the expression of our feelings, when we speak man to man; and I shall not resent this uncivil language until you have heard me to an end. If you should still persist to address me in a style as unbecoming to yourself as it is inappropriate, I am weak, it is true, but I will endeavour to show you how we English repress insolence. Come, Sir, be a man;—no offence has been meant to you. Listen to me calmly, and you will see that I have only performed my duty, and feel for the struggle which it has cost me. When I tell you that I leave the island in the Carribbee, it should settle the question of our rivalry at once and for ever."

"Well, Sir, I suppose I must hear you, though I confess myself unable to imagine whither all this is tending."

Temple, in as concise a form of words as possible, firmly and kindly recapitulated all the facts of his story, as far as concerned his connexion with Colonel Levison, the sudden death of the

latter, the numerous appearances which he had seen, the rumours current among the peasantry residing in the scenes of his former exploits; he mentioned the anonymous letter, his own visit to Levison Court, and Vial's unguarded talk on shipboard; and gave such a sketch of the wickedness and whimsicality of the deceased, as made any freak, however monstrous, not incredible. Castro listened to him, at first with insolent scorn—then haughty impatience; this subsided into toleration, and this changed to attention, which, as the narrative proceeded, became restlessly intense.

"Thus far," continued Walter, "I have mentioned only conjectures; but I have received a few lines in my last packet of letters from England, which bring the matter far nearer to a certainty, and offer a clue, which I will make it my business to follow to an end, immediately upon my return. Here is the letter; read it for yourself, and then tell me as a gentleman, whether I have done more than my duty in intreating Mrs. Levison to pause, at least, before she rushes on a step which may subject her to so much future misery."

Castro took the letter, and attempted to read it; his agitation was so great, that the paper twice dropped from his hands before he could master its contents.

"And you are going to England," cried he, starting up, "in the Carribbee?"

"I am; and will lose no time, after my arrival, in tracing this matter out."

"You shall be troubled no farther," replied he haughtily; "as Mrs. Levison's dearest friend, the investigation of this matter belongs to me. I shall also take my passage in the Carribbee, and make it my business to discover whether you have been fooled by a parcel of old women's tales, or whether this fiend in human form be yet alive;—if he be, he has a long account to settle, if not—"

"The question will be at rest for ever. You will do right, Mr. Castro, in repairing to England without delay;—it is your business. With respect to the feelings with which you may regard me, I am indifferent—for I know that one day you will learn to know me better."

"No, Sir, never!" replied Castro, setting his teeth firmly together, while his eyes gleamed as fiercely as those of some wild animal meditating a spring; "were you to be proved right a thousand times over, it would not in the least alter my opinion of your interference. You have destroyed more happiness than ever the world saw before. We might have gone on in blessed ignorance to the end of our lives. What are your trumpety English laws to me? Sybil is mine—mine only;—

and I hate you, and shall hate the sight of you for ever! You have done your worst to divide those who are already united. You shall not, you *cannot* prevail; but, for your endeavour's sake, may every curse and blight fall upon your favourite schemes—above all, in the matter of your affections!—and they assuredly will!”

He snatched up his sword as he spoke, and made his way out of the room. It was well for the maintenance of peace, that Walter was weakened by illness,—otherwise, his compassion might not have entirely restrained him from resenting the passion of a spirit chafed beyond its power to bear. His thoughts too, were more upon Mrs. Levison than Castro; and he eagerly awaited the appearance of Huntley, who brought him tidings not so hopelessly bad as might have been expected. His patient had raved herself into a state of insensibility, and had fallen into a heavy sleep; but she might (and the supposition was a dreadful one) awake to a return of those fearful paroxysms—or this slumber, induced by a sedative, might wear away all the frenzy at once. But, in any case, nothing could be looked forward to but wretchedness—a misery which must be protracted for many months, perhaps even a life; and it required all Temple's high sense of right to sustain him against the unjust self-reproach of having acted indiscreetly. Fortunately, for his peace of mind, the better chance happened, and she awoke after a sleep of eighteen hours, keenly alive to her wretchedness, it is true, but calm and tearful.

Miserable as this was, it amounted to some comfort; and Walter was gratified to hear that she had strength of mind enough to limit herself to one interview with Castro, in which she expressed her full approbation of his voyage to England, and declared her intention of retiring into the country, and entirely secluding herself from society until the truth should be ascertained. The day before they sailed, Walter received a slip of paper, on which were these words written by her own hand, “I forgive you!” He had hardly expected even this much, from his knowledge of her vehement character.

Never did he feel a stronger sensation of relief than at the moment when his foot felt the deck of the Carribbee beneath him. There was not a soul in Jamaica whom he cared to leave, save Mrs. Levison, to be in whose neighbourhood was a trial, and the Bakewells, whose gratitude had been unceasing, and one of whom wept to take her leave of him, and declared that she could never do enough for her little Annie's friend; and yet the homeward voyage promised nothing but restraint and trial;—how different was it from the last which he had undertaken! His sole fellow-passenger was a man who had good

cause to avoid him as much as possible, and whose anger did not follow the established rule of being as short-lived as it was violent. To complete the matter, Vial had been sent by Mrs. Levison to attend upon her friend, and Walter shrewdly suspected that he was not the only contribution she had made towards the comfort of Castro's voyage. The captain of the Carribbee was a rude and surly man—the weather rough; and all these annoyances bore doubly hard upon Temple, from the precarious state of his health, which, however, the sea-blasts seemed to amend.

The first week of the voyage passed heavily to all on board. Temple had hoped to have come to a better understanding with Castro, but his hopes were disappointed as often as they were made. The promise of perpetual hatred seemed in a fair way of being kept—whenever they chanced to meet suddenly, and face to face, the Portuguese darted such a scowl from under his shaggy eyebrows, as told that his passion was only just kept under. With all this sullenness, Walter could not but be sorry for him,—he had no resources,—no occupation, save to brood over his own disquietude,—and would tramp up and down the deck for hours together, with a quick impatient step, trying to sing, that no one might guess the misery he was enduring. The daily collision with his unwilling enemy seemed to exasperate his feelings to such a point, that Temple was compelled to look forward to a time when they would break out with a fury, which would demand stern and peremptory notice.

It was a brilliant moonlight night,—and Walter imagined himself to be alone on deck, save for the man at the helm. He was musing on present, past, and future, and trying, with a strange perseverance, to reconcile the identity of the boy, so wild, ungovernable and aimless, with the man, who, at least, attempted to submit his conduct to the influence of some regulating principle. From this subject of contemplation, he passed to another,—his hand in his bosom fell upon Isabella Lesage's letter, and he smiled to find how different a guise her image wore now, from the one in which it used to rise before him during his last voyage, as contrasted with the brilliant Mrs. Levison. Whilst he stood, hours passed unheeded, as on the former night, when his reveries had been interrupted by Vial. He was leaning over the vessel's side, looking on the glittering waves without seeing them, and feeling the breeze without hearing it,—when a sudden splash and plunge announced to the man at the helm, that some one had fallen overboard;—and when he looked to the spot where Temple had been standing, there was no one to be seen!



## PART VII.

## THE HEIRESS AND HER MAID.

"If ever there was a provoking girl on the face of this earth, it is my niece, Isabella Lesage! It is really enough to put any one past his patience to hear her talk; as if a fortune of forty thousand pounds was a thing of no consequence, to say nothing of the blood that is in his veins. Here she is, losing her time in this upstart good-for-nothing place, when she might marry into the peerage, if she was only seen, who knows!—and, as if that would not content her, must needs go to Dale Hall, to spend her Christmas with those Roystons!—How I hate obstinate people!—I was always the most persuadable creature in the world, poor dear Lesage used to say"—and hear the widow paused, as much for lack of breath, as lack of audience.

Meanwhile, Isabella was enjoying herself as quietly as if she had still been a poor woman, and, in spite of the disturbances which had annoyed the inhabitants of Dale Hall, during her last visit there, was very happy under its roof. The nocturnal noises, however, had, for the present, utterly ceased, and no more appearances of wicked men clad in blue uniforms were to be seen, had she paid them the compliment of sitting up all the night to receive them. Even Cicely's budget of wonders contained only the old stock of tales,—cook and warming-pan included. Mrs. Royston no longer spoke of removing, "because of the hobgoblins," as the country people had declared she intended. There was the usual dance to be given in Christmas week,—the house to be dressed up with yew and holly, and other evergreen shrubs,—and the weather most seasonably bright and frosty. Mrs. Lesage positively refused to be buried alive even for her dear Isabella's sake; and the latter was obliged to endure the mournfulness of her tomb alone, though, to all appearance, never was lady merrier in her sepulchre.

I say, to all appearance, because, though her outward demeanour was at its gayest, she had her moments of serious thought when alone. She was not one of those who could fall into the possession of a fortune as they would join a country dance, and enjoy it without thinking of anything beyond the amusement of the passing hour. Without any parade or affectation, she felt the responsibilities attached to great riches, sometimes to a degree which made her question the possibility

of happiness being in the power of the wealthy. She was anxious for a little breathing time ;—a little temporary retirement, wherein she might make up her plans for the future,—and, disregarding all her aunt's schemes of aggrandizement, looked forward with solicitude as well as hope.

Her resolution to remain in the country was as displeasing to another, as it had been to her aunt,—that other being Mrs. Vial, whom Isabella had taken as maid, from the kind motive of a wish to provide her with the shelter of a respectable home while her husband was absent from England. She protested, as much as an Abigail dared, against such a strange plan as her lady had adopted. Miss Lesage would have dismissed her from her service at once, as she had early discovered that her maid, except as far as concerned the business of her toilette, was weak, frivolous, and deceitful, had she not also discovered that Mrs. Vial bore about her that fearful malady, the end whereof is almost always certain death,—to speak plainly, an incipient cancer. The medical men had declared that her only chance for life, or even an extension of her days, laid in living generously, and being treated gently, and refraining from any severe labour ; and these, Isabella was resolved to ensure her, at the price of so much of her own personal comfort. The poor silly creature was so unconscious or so reckless of her danger, that she even regarded her continuance with Isabella rather as a proof of her own cleverness, than the Christianity of her mistress. To listen to her prate was as much as the latter could bear with anything like patience ;—it was so completely the overflowings of a vain and crooked mind : a mixture of flattery and gossip which was positively past endurance. She would chatter away to Isabella for hours together, in spite of all prohibition and absence of reply, in the nauseous and antiquated style of declaring that “she had been never so happy before ;—so pleasant it was to serve such a sweet and liberal lady,” and the like.

“Have done, Vial !” cried Isabella, one evening, cutting her short in the most flowery of her flowery harangues :—“you know that such nonsense is what I will not listen to. I shall be compelled to part with you, if you cannot contrive to rein in your tongue ;—and though I should be sorry to do so ; I will, most assuredly.”

“Part with me, Ma’am !—O you could not think of such a thing !—me, who does your hair so beautiful—to be sure, such hair as it is !”

“Cannot you refrain for one moment ?—You should remember, with your life, in such a precarious state as it is, that it is not the time for falsehood and flattery.”

"My life!—O Ma'am!—you do not mean to say that you think I shall die?"

"You know that I am acquainted with the full extent of your case,—and I know—Vial, I am in serious earnest,—that such complaints are rarely cured without an operation, which Doctor Goodrich does not recommend."

"O Ma'am—don't! don't!—I should die if one of them surgeons was to touch me!" cried Vial, looking as if she was going to faint;—"but you are not in earnest, surely?"

"I am indeed," replied Isabella gravely:—"and I say so, that you may take the matter to heart. I will also tell you why I retain you in my service:—simply to give you the advantage of such remedies as are in the reach of the rich. You should reflect upon this,—you should try to bring your mind into a more proper state than this frivolity, of which you never seem to be weary. You should look at the *possibility* of your dying soon, for your children's sake—for your husband's!"

"Dying!—O Lord have mercy upon me!—But I don't feel like it at all, ma'am!—Thomas, Mrs. Royston's man, said to me last night,—Dear, dear! how you are creasing that good satin! do let me fold it properly."

"Cannot you be serious while I am speaking to you?" continued her mistress, yet more severely;—"cannot you comprehend that it is for no gain, for no pleasure of my own that I am saying this?—that if you were to die to-morrow, I should be neither better nor worse? Have you forgotten what Doctor Goodrich told you?"

"O ma'am! Doctor Goodrich indeed! I put no faith in him at all—there's those in this neighbourhood that know better."

Isabella was very near losing her patience at the continued impenetrability of the woman, and to keep the small remnant which remained, said no more. And to judge by Mrs. Vial's demeanour next morning, her mistress might have spared her remonstrance, for any good that it had effected. She resolved then no longer to endure the daily annoyance of her attendance, and that night to inform her maid that they must part. That night, the Christmas dance was to take place. The house was thrown open to all the inhabitants of the surrounding neighbourhood, gentle and simple,—for Mrs. Royston, in spite of the remonstrances of "her genteel daughter Arnold," would keep up old customs. There was music provided in the shape of a fiddler whose powers of continuance the mighty Paganini himself might not disdain to envy:—a supper, which a town audience would have regarded as provisions for a month, and yet it proved no more than was manageable by the hearty guests,

—and merry faces, both of young and old, enough to charm a smile from the most splenetic.

Mr. Le Beaumont was one of the party. Dale Parish adjoined the one in which Levison Court was situated. Isabella, whose enjoyment was always more contemplative than active, soon withdrew from the dance, and entertained herself by beholding it from a distance. He presently joined her.

"Is not this a lively scene?" said he, "or are you so completely accustomed to take pleasure in town amusements, as to perceive the coarseness of it, compared with them, rather than the gaiety."

"Far from it," replied she eagerly, "I am as much interested in looking on, as I am *not* in a common-place town party; the very sight of those groups of people is exhilarating. Perhaps, as you do not dance, you will give me your arm, and let us walk about a little."

Mr. Le Beaumont was pleased with the frankness of her manner, and they mixed with the crowd; the Priest often stopping to exchange a kind word with some one or other of his flock. "Who would think," said he at last, unconsciously, "that we are in a haunted house?"

Isabella was struck by his tone, nor less by the inquiry which followed. "You knew Mr. Temple of —, did you not?"

Miss Lesage replied in the affirmative.

"And I think," continued he, "that you made some extraordinary communication to him, before he left England?"

"May I ask how you became acquainted with the circumstance?"

"Certainly; hoping that you will, in turn, answer my next inquiry—of course you will not mention the circumstance. Mr. Temple came over to Levison Court, on that same evening, and told me. I should be very much obliged by a sight of that note, if you have kept it, and could find it without much trouble."

"Nay then, Mr. Le Beaumont, excuse me if I put question for question, and ask you whether you suspect that you know the writer?"

"I do; but you must not ask me how I made the discovery, remembering that my connexion with my flock prevents my replying to any such inquiry. You have a maid servant, have you not, whose name is Florence Vial?"

"O Mr. Le Beaumont! is it possible that she can have written it? She cannot write, and is so stupid that she declares she has no wish to learn."

"Has she told you that she cannot write?"

"Yes."

"Then she has deceived you; I have seen her sign her name. Is this," he produced the fly-leaf of a book, on which the words were rudely scrawled, "is this at all like the handwriting of the note?"

Isabella was at once struck by the resemblance, there was a particular turn in the E, which almost amounted to identity, though some pains had evidently been taken to disguise it. To make assurance doubly sure, however, she ran up stairs, and brought down the document in question. They examined it carefully, and there remained not a doubt upon the minds of either, that the writing was the work of the same hand.

"Where is Vial?" exclaimed Isabella, "I have not noticed her among the dancers,—I will lose no time in investigating the matter."

"Be careful what you do," replied the Priest; "you may depend upon it that the woman has acted under influence, and that she must have strong reasons for secrecy. I am clear that we have the clue, to this and much more foul play of a similar kind; but to use it rightly will require delicacy and discretion:—and I am comforted to think that Mr. Temple is already too much upon his guard to take any rash step of marriage—"

"Any rash step of marriage!" exclaimed Cicely Royston, gaily approaching them, "did you ever hear the like!—and from you, Mr. Le Beaumont, who couldn't marry if you would. Fie upon you!—fie!—and you, Isabella, ought to know better than to flirt with the reverend father!"

"You have been too lavish of your attentions towards the gay young farmers to have any right to reflect upon your neighbours, Cicely—but have you seen my maid Vial among the crowd?"

"I?—no, and I wonder what can have become of the smart pink cap which she was trimming up, I suspect for Thomas' benefit. He too is absent, I perceive—no, yonder is his plum-coloured coat just peeping in at the door, and without her, which is a wonder. Will you not dance again, Isabella—do—Sir Roger de Coverley?"

"I am tired, and would rather look on—and I shall retire very soon; but, see, they are standing up,—make haste, Cicely, or you will loose your place."

Cicely found the temptation of that merry old dance even greater than the pleasure of trying to find out what Mr. Le Beaumont could have been saying to Miss Lesage, that made her look so earnest."

"It is very strange," resumed the Priest, growing grave when she was gone, "and not like an occurrence of the times

in which we live—that one, whose death so many witnessed—should be rumoured, and believed by some, to be yet alive,—and what the wretched man could mean by remaining in England, save to cause as much confusion as possible, I cannot guess.”

“He was considered partially insane, was he not?” said Isabella, to whom the subject was very interesting.

“Why, my dear young lady, I cannot stretch my charity so far as to imagine it; because, if so, any wickedness which profligate men choose to commit, might be explained away at once, in the same manner. He was wickedly disposed from his youth upwards, and never so well pleased as when he could raise a laugh, by giving some one else pain or disappointment. I could tell you a thousand stories of his diabolical proceedings. This hall, itself, has witnessed not a few; and could his spirit return anywhere, it would—but what do you see yonder?”

“Nothing,” replied Isabella, shuddering, as she recollected herself; “but fancy can do strange things, and I almost thought that yonder fine picture was changed into that hideous one, with the blue uniform, which you pointed out to me, when I was at Levison Court.”

At this moment some one touched Miss Lesage’s arm. It was one of the maid-servants, with, “If you please, Ma’am, Mrs. Vial is very ill upstairs in your dressing-room, and cries out for you at no rate. Will you be so good as to come and see what is the matter—such fits, Ma’am!”

Isabella made haste upstairs, and found that the maid’s account fell short of the truth—Vial was in a pitiable state. She must have been out in the hail-shower, for her hair was wet, and her lower garments dripping, and spotted with mud. Her gay bonnet had brought home the running branch of a bramble, and was tossed in a shattered state, upon the floor. She was by turns weeping, laughing, pushing away every one that came near her, and screaming for them not to leave her. Her mistress perceived that this was only an hysteric affection, brought on by some sudden fright, and approached her, with that tone of quiet decision which rarely fails in its effect. “Vial, I must have you tied unless you will be calmer, and allow Nanny to undress you and put you to bed; you shall sleep in my bed, and I will watch you.”

“O Miss Lesage! Miss Lesage! O my dear mistress!—hold me! keep my hands fast!—I shall die—I know I shall—I am sure of it!”

“You must keep yourself quiet, or as Mr. Le Beaumont is, most luckily, down stairs, I will call him up!”

"O no doctor! no doctor!—I shall die soon enough without one, I know I shall! O pray let nobody come in!"

"If you will allow Nanny to undress you, nobody shall come in, otherwise I must send for Mr. Le Beaumont; we cannot allow you to disturb the house in this wild way."

But the dread of Mr. Le Beaumont, and the resolution of Isabella's manner, had the desired effect. A copious shower of tears followed this burst of agitation, and after Vial had been put to bed she grew calmer, as long as her mistress remained in sight. Miss Lesage resolved upon watching her:—and refusing entrance to any one, (for she was satisfied that there was no danger), she made up her fire, and drawing an easy chair close to it, sat down to read—occasionally looking up from her book, to see if the sedative which she had administered was taking effect.

But sleep did not come:—Mrs. Vial, like the Baron of Smayl-home's lady, "tossed and turned," and continued to exhibit every possible sign of vigilance and anxiety. At length, when an hour or two had been thus spent, and the night was fast advancing towards morning, she called her mistress to her bedside, with, "If you please, ma'am, and will not be angry—I have something to tell you."

Isabella was ready and curious to hear.

"I know I shall die, ma'am," continued her maid in a tone far different from her usually flippant one, "and so it is of no use to hide anything; I am sure that I shall die!"

"Why, Vial, this is being as much too gloomy as you were too giddy last night—had you not better go to sleep?"

"O Ma'am! I am going to die! and must tell you *all*! for all I did not seem to care last night, I was frightened enough to hear you talk, and I heard the servants talking about the famous Manks conjurer who is here, Ma'am, and can cure everything, they say; and so, Ma'am, I asked Thomas if he would take me, and I would slip out unknown to-night, while the rest of them were dancing, and see what he could do for me."

"O Vial! Vial!—have you been so silly as to go out on such a cold night as this, after all I have said to you—and to find a conjurer?"

"Yes, sure, Ma'am, he's a wonderful man, I heard them telling in the servant's hall—how he had cured Mrs. Bimson's child that was begrudged."

"Begrudged?"

"Yes, Ma'am, with an evil eye—some one begrudged her, and she could not walk, for all she is twelve years old, and they took her to this same old Barrow Wenn, and he said a

verse over her—and gave Mrs. Bimson a bottle,—and the child was getting so well and strong, and could nearly walk, only it fell out of bed, and hurted itself, and so it died.”

“And is it possible that you believe all this?”

“And so, Ma’am,” continued Vial, too intent upon her own story, to notice the question, “Thomas took me, as soon as they was all set to dancing—such a lonesome way as we went! through what they call Pembo Wood:—and the wind making such a dismal sound!—But he cheered me up as well as he could. He’s a kind man, that Thomas.—Well, and so at last we got to the Wood end, and he showed me a light, as if a little candle was burning, on the other side of the ploughed field, and he said, ‘You must go alone. He lives yonder!’—I said, I dared not,—but he told me he would stand at the gate, and watch me all the way, and I had come so far, and got so wet, it was a pity to come back without having my fortune told,—and then I unbethought me, that I had best go by myself, lest Thomas should guess what I was after.”

“And you went on?”

“Well, Ma’am, and so I left him standing at the gate—poor Thomas!—with his lantern—and I scrambled across the field any how, till I came to the other side on the common-edge:—O dear, such a dismal place!—for the moon was out, and I could see very well. He lives in a sod hut—you never saw such a hole; fit only for a savage to live in!—and I was in such a twitter I durst not knock at the door for many a minute. But he opened it himself. He *knewed* that I was there! O Ma’am, such a wonderful man! with a long white beard. They say that he is a hundred years old!”

“Well, and what did he say to you,” inquired her mistress, curious to hear the sequel, in spite of her vexation at the woman’s absurdity.

“O Ma’am! he *knewed* all about me!—He told me what it was I wanted, and how my husband was in foreign parts, and he said the Doctors was a parcel of book-learned heathens, and that he would touch it for me with a dead man’s hand,—and it would get well directly!”

Isabella could not help relieving herself of her disgust with an involuntary gesture, but her maid did not perceive it, and went on eagerly:

“And so he took it out of a box, Ma’am. It was for all the world like a claw, so yellow and dry!—There were two in the box;—I suppose he keeps one on purpose for children,—and he touched me with it:—I felt as cold—all over chill!—and he asked me a deal of questions, and told me that I should be in a house of my own before this time next year, and he writ



me a charm, Ma'am, and told me not to show it to any one;—so you must not ask to see it, Ma'am."

"And then you came home?"

"O now comes the dreadfulest thing!—Well, some how or other, Thomas had forgot me, or thought I should be longer: for when I got to the gate, he was not there;—but was walking up and down the wood, I could see by his lantern, whistling, to keep himself warm. I called, and called, but he did not hear me:—the wind was making such a noise! Just then, the moon came out, all of a sudden: when I heard something come stride, striding behind me, and I looked back—I wonder what made me!—and there he was!

"He!—do you mean the conjurer?"

"O Ma'am, no!—the wicked Colonel."

"What!—whom do you mean?"

"Colonel Levison, Ma'am!—I knewed his figure too well!—Many's the time I've seen him, to my cost, and many a one beside me. Well, Ma'am, there he was stride, striding close behind me, and just as he was close up, Thomas, it seems, unbethought him, and was turning back. I tried to speak, but gave such a screech—I hear myself yet!—and I ran against Thomas quite in an ecstasy. 'What's to be done now, Mrs. Vial?' said he, quite cool,—for he thought I had lost my wits:—and when I told him,—there was nothing, he said,—and sure enough, he *was* gone:—but I saw the wicked Colonel, I am sure! It was for a warning;—they say he always comes back before some one is going to die, and I am sure it must be me!"

"But, Vial, this is a very strange story of yours:—do you mean to say that you saw Colonel Levison or his ghost?"

"O Ma'am! what else *could* it be—and why he should trouble me, I know not!—The Lord have mercy upon me!"

"And yet," continued Isabella, looking steadily upon her maid, to discover how much of this terror was real or feigned,—"some say he is not dead yet. Who told *you* so? and bade you write to me? You must confess everything to me—for you are fully discovered!"

"O Ma'am! forgive me, forgive me this once, and I will never do the like again, and tell you all—indeed I will,—about the letter. You know, Ma'am, my husband is Mrs. Levison's man-servant. Well, I took such a fancy as never was to go to Jamaica with her—and she would not have me. I suppose some one had been telling her tales about me. She must needs set up Mrs. Alexander, as if she could dress her head, let alone washing lace,—and—I said I would be revenged upon her!"

"And that was the way you took?"

"I am telling you everything, Ma'am, just as it happened.

My husband and me never agreed well,—and he was always talking about this and t'other he would do, if Mrs. Levison married Mr. Temple. He was ill off against him, as I was against her:—now I liked him—for he was civil to me, and knew how Vial used to beat me!—That Colonel Levison did a bad job when he made us marry together.”

“And you would yet have gone out to Jamaica in his company!—Your story does not agree with itself—I cannot understand it.”

“O Ma'am! anything better than being left at home, and having to work so,—and the Doctors said it would be good for my complaint:—and I had not heard of this place then, or I wouldn't have wished to go nowhere!”

“I am sadly afraid, Vial, that you are trying to deceive me. Take care what you do;—if you are to die, how would you like that one of the last acts of your life should be a deliberate falsehood?—Was this your *only* reason for writing that note?—Did your husband know of it, in the least?—Answer me—or I shall put the affair into Mr. Le Beaumont's hands.”

“Oh Ma'am, the Priest has knewed it ever since I came here, and he charged me to tell you, but I was afraid you would be so angry. O no, Ma'am!—my husband would'n't have done nothing to stop the-marriage! He would have half killed me, if he had guessed a bit about it.”

“Do you think that your husband suspected that Colonel Levison was alive?”

“Indeed, Ma'am, I cannot say:—he was so close over every-thing.—Alive, Ma'am!—O no, it is *unpossible*!—I saw his spirit, and so fierce, with those terrible flaming eyes!—It was an unlucky day when he was born! If I had never seen him, I should not have been lying here what I am;—and my husband would have been a decent post-boy still.”

“A post-boy!” exclaimed Isabella, upon whose mind new light darted;—“was he then the person whom Colonel Levison employed when he was running away with his wife?”

“He was, Ma'am;—and I wonder Mr. Temple never found it out:—to be sure, he was in such a state that night!—and as for Doctor Goodrich, dear me! he'd never find out nothing.—But O, how cold I feel! all of a shiver—I am sure I shall die!”

Isabella administered a cordial to the poor woman, who presently began to dose. Not so her mistress:—she busied herself in noting down Mrs. Vial's precise words; and teased by the explanation which seemed to deepen rather than diminish the mystery, spent the remainder of the night without slumber. The conviction of the possibility that Colonel Levison might

yet be alive, acquired some strength from the disclosures made by her servant. Why, with the hatred which Vial had conceived towards Temple, should he have wished to forward a match which promised happiness and prosperity to the young merchant, unless he were like some dark shadow, lurking in the back ground, waiting for a moment when he might come forward successfully to execute his revenge. The idea was fearfully fascinating,—and consonant with all that she had heard of the Colonel's schemes and achievements; which, likewise, were some of them sufficiently flagrant to make him anxious to elude the grasp of Justice, by remaining concealed. She resolved to communicate with Temple, as well as Mr. Le Beaumont, feeling, that in a matter whereon so much might depend, she *dared not* withhold any discovery from the parties most concerned.

As soon, therefore, as it was possible, she made the Priest acquainted with the substance of Mrs. Vial's communication, which, in every respect, coincided with the tale Mr. Le Beaumont had gathered from her own lips; and she was of too weak a character to be consistent in a lie had she possessed wit sufficient to invent one.

Her health had received a severe shock in the cold which she caught during her night-walk, and the physicians declared her case to be almost hopeless, unless she could at once be removed to a milder air. Bath was mentioned as a place which might be of use, and Isabella, though she resisted the idea of being carried thither "as an heiress, with a diamond label about her neck," was willing to take the journey at once, for the sake of keeping alive one so worthless, and yet, one whom it might be of some consequence to be able to produce on a future day. She was scantily repaid by any gratitude on the part of the sufferer:—and Mrs. Leage was unsparing of her sneers. "This was always her niece's odd way! never to notice advice and to take it after all!—and she could pretend to go to Bath for the sake of her maid, as if any one was likely to believe it!—Let alone your quiet young ladies for not caring for lovers!—Isabella was only a woman!"—and the like.

With the information conveyed to Temple was another piece of news, yet more important, added by Mr. Le Beaumont. Barrow Wenn's reign had been presently brought to a close, by those sturdy and incredulous guardians of the public good, yclept Justices of the Peace. He was seized in the midst of all his trumpery, in the very act of fortune-telling, and straightway lodged in Bridewell:—nor did the health of the neighbourhood suffer much from the abstraction of the sage, in spite of his furious and solemn denunciations. It was discovered upon examination, in fact, from his own confession, that the two with-

ered hands, wherewith he had been used to minister healing to the sick, had been stolen from the chapel at Levison Court;—the said Barrow Wenn proving to be a run-away sexton, one of the establishments of the wicked Colonel. The Priest examined the hands with eagerness:—there was nothing wanting to the completeness of the pair. Here was matter for fresh doubt!—

It cost Isabella a severe struggle before she could make up her mind to intrude herself upon Walter's notice;—and the more so, because, since he had left England, she had begun to suspect herself of entertaining, with respect to him, such feelings as no woman likes to own towards any man, in the first instance. She was vigilant in the task of self-examination, and had early discovered the entrance of this intruding fancy, and distressed herself no little, by thinking how her interference *might* be interpreted. But her innate uprightness, and the consciousness of her own integrity came to her relief;—she felt that she could acquit herself of any mean or selfish motive, and this being once established, she fulfilled her duty with a simplicity and brevity which could not, she hoped, be misunderstood. She then dismissed the matter from her mind, and, by way of aiding the diversion of her thoughts, allowed herself to join in more of the gaieties of Bath than she would, at another time, have entered into; and subjected herself to her aunt's public praise and private remark of "Such an odd girl!—She pretend not to be fond of amusement!"

The primary object of her visit to the city of wits and waters was not answered. Mrs. Vial sunk rapidly under the cold which was not to be thrown off, and sunk without even a temporary show of rallying. The approach of Death, when first it was fairly set before her, was most terrific to the weak and ignorant woman, and Isabella was thankful that it was in the power of a Priest, who was summoned to her bedside,—to awaken her serious thoughts, while he allayed this more than childish terror. She was brought to some sense of the folly and worthlessness of her past life. She exhibited so much of maternal propriety, as to shudder at the idea of her sons coming under the influence of their father:—and so much of gratitude as repeatedly to acknowledge in poor but sincere language, her sense of what she owed to her humane mistress, whose forbearance was thus smoothing her death-bed, and who promised to befriend her children whom she left behind. It was only a few days before she died, that she assured Miss Lesage, with great solemnity, that her statement with respect to the anonymous letter was, in every respect true:—and, at last, she expired in a sudden convulsion, a few moments after she had been express-

ing how comfortable her mind was now, and how little she should wish to be recalled to the temptations of life. Let us hope that, in this matter she was not self-deceived!

Isabella protracted her residence at Bath. She found amusement in its constantly changing society, and was of a nature to be unwilling to remove from a spot when once settled in it. It was a pleasant novelty for one who had passed a youth of such reserve, to try a different scene:—it was delightful to make any one so happy, as she made Cicely Royston; by summoning her to share in the gaieties of that gay city, and she could afford to listen to her aunt's murmurings at the impolicy of the invitation. "As if two young women were not always in each others' way!—and some called Cicely pretty;—for *her* part, she thought her forward and vulgar looking, and what was more, the Honourable Mr. Towerham thought so, and *said* so too!"

This Honourable Mr. Towerham was well nigh as acceptable to Mrs. Lesage, as a Levison would have been, in days of yore, for many and good reasons. He was of good family—still handsome, and always gentlemanly. He rode well—drove well;—talked well—understood every game under the sun,—(and some which only make their appearance when "the owl is abroad,")—and above all admired Isabella, and her eighty thousand pounds. Mrs. Lesage did not care which; for somehow or other, while the little penniless country maiden was winning hearts by the score, Isabella had less to answer for than most heiresses. As her aunt had said "she spoke out, and made the men afraid of her." Therefore, a regular admirer, who met her frankness with an equal absence of reserve, and yet a good gentlemanly taste which was sure to keep its owner clear of all offence,—one who abstained from compliments—who attended them upon all tenable occasions, and declared "that she was the most refined and intellectual young person whom he had met for the last twenty years," (for the Honourable Mr. Towerham owned that he had reached that point, at which, so sings Doctor Young, 'a man owns himself to be a fool')—an admirer so thoroughgoing as to satisfy the aunt, and yet so discreet in his advances as not to alarm the niece, was a real prize, and treated accordingly.

It is at once, one of the pleasures and difficulties of acquaintanceship, that it is often entered into so imperceptibly, that the past habits and pursuits of the parties are taken upon trust—and not discovered, until both have gone too far to recede, and either find that they are fast approaching intimacy with those who are unsuited to them, if not ineligible as intimates, or, it may be, (and how delightful is such a discovery!) that they have entertained angels unawares. Mr. Towerham had been

than usually fond of play, though he had totally neglected since Isabella had crossed his path. It was said, that he so skilful and fortunate as to have entirely foiled a professed master with his own weapons; and the latter was so dread-chagrined, as much from envy at his antagonist's skill, as from ruin caused by his own enormous losses, that he had added himself to the most unrestrained intemperance, which had affected his reason. Mrs. Lesage had gathered this up among much other scandal—but—worldly and wicked as he was!—purposely refrained from repeating the anecdote to Isabella. She satisfied her conscience with the never-failing idea, that Isabella was so odd!—she would certainly make some open and unpleasant quarrel with him, and she really could not spare her husband,—he was such an obliging creature!”

Things had reached the point when a daily visit was vouchsafed by the gentleman and received by the ladies—graciously, and regarded Mrs. Lesage—courteously, as far as Isabella was concerned—when, one morning, Cicely Royston burst into the room, with an open letter in her hand.

“From Mrs. Arnold?” said Mrs. Lesage, who never liked to pry so well as when she had received one of her sister’s letters, which, to do them justice, were tolerably faithful vehicles of local gossip.

“Such news, Isabella!” cried Cicely, “such strange, sad news!—come up to your dressing-room, and we will read it together.”

“One of Cicely’s mysteries, I suppose,” said Isabella, smiling as she laid her book aside; “do not look so sorry, my dear aunt; it will be common property long before it is time. Mr. Towerham, I wish you good morning;” and she withdrew to listen to the letter, little imagining how much her wits were calculated to shake her nerves.

“Now, to any one who does not know her ways as well as I do Mr. Towerham,” said the widow, apologetically, “Isabella would seem curious as well as abrupt; but, dear girl, it is her amiability!—just to humour that child—What can she mean the girl, I wonder? but, dear Mr. Towerham, do come and tell me who ever is this queer figure in the street, making such antics—and it does not appear for money?” A gentleman came to the window, to look at the object of Mrs. Lesage’s wonder. This was a man who might either be five or sixty-five years old, who was walking or rather leaning in the fresh spring sunshine which filled half the room; and, though emaciated by illness, as was evident from his leaden complexion and shrunken figure, was executing strange gambols and uttering such discordant cries, as if

must have required considerable strength to produce. His appearance was as fantastic as his demeanour; his head was bare, and his long white hair tossed hither and thither on the buoyant wind. He was clad in a faded scarlet hunting jacket, with outside pockets, from each of which dangled a coarse and gaudy cotton handkerchief; his waistcoat also might have been purchased from a decayed Nimrod—it was of brown fustian, whilom olive green, faded, and rubbed, and stained with riding and revelling,—and so large, that its tenant might easily have admitted his double to participate in its benefits. His breeches—a relic of Ridottos and assemblies of other days—did as strict justice to his thighs, as his waistcoat was ample; his hose had been of fine brown silk, *en suite*, now darned into a perfect mosaic with many coloured worsteds—and his feet elated in loose dingy slippers. His aspect was vicious in the extreme;—now he stood clenched up against a wall in dogged silence—then, he would burst out into something between a scream and a song—and, swearing most horribly, pursue with stick and stone, any child who had looked at him as he passed, or, more audacious, had ventured some sneer at his gay coat and bare head.

“Dear, what a frightful object!” cried Mrs. Lesage, who was not too much shocked to be very curious. “See, he is chewing something. I should not like to meet him; why do the magistrates allow him to go at large? Do you know who he is, Mr. Towerham?”

Her companion was not so callous as to be able to answer without some hesitation. “Did you ever hear of Corby, the gamester?” said he at last; “but I forget—you are not one of the regular frequenters of Bath—and this is too painful! let us withdraw,”—for just at that moment, the keen eye of the temporary madman had been caught by the sun glancing upon the buttons of the gentleman’s coat, and he had sprung into the middle of the street, capering and singing aloud a wicked song with a burden such as:

I and the Devil and Death—a goodly three  
Shall come, my bonny boy, and dwell with thee!

“And that is Corby?” exclaimed the heartless widow, putting up her glass to take a last look as she retreated, that she might not *seem* unfeeling. There was no retreating from the hearing of his cries, and the shouts of the mob which was beginning to gather. Mr. Towerham had nothing to say—and the widow only: “I wonder has Isabella seen him? poor man, how horrid!”

abella was, at that moment, weeping over Mrs. Arnold's ; she did not join the party again for the remainder of the and, by way of commenting upon Cicely's unwise communication—"how shocked she was to hear of Mr. Temple's drowned! and my sister Arnold hopes the Portuguese be hanged for the murder,"—the politic lady added: they were old acquaintance, Mr. Towerham—almost related, I may say;—Mr. Temple's mother was a Levison."

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## PART VIII.

### THE CHANCES OF THE SEA.

No one in his senses, who has accompanied my tale thus far, will believe that Walter Temple perished in the waters, it is useless to prolong what does not amount to suspense, and to the reader from the party in whose adventures he is most interested. Walter did not perish; though the darkness of the night and the swift sailing of the Carribbee made any attempt to rescue him, on the part of those on board her, utterly unavailing—and they concluded, therefore, that he was lost for ever.

The hero of a story has always some advantage—some *just* sufficient to save him;—and a floating spar, which providential chance flung into Temple's arms, after he had been supporting himself in the water for the best part of an hour, afforded him so much assistance, that he was able to swim her through the night. O the length of that night! short summer though it was—and the dreariness of that "broad yawn of sunrise" over the world of waters! I have described him as one of a bold and self-sustained spirit. He had need of it to enable him to meet the prospect of a fearful death. As his thoughts, they were beyond his control;—remembrances of the past, visions of the future, all merged in the mere anxiety of preserving life; and when the peril was past, he answered all inquiries as to his sensations during those long hours, by declaring that though he seemed to live a life, in the space of that period, so much of confusion, amounting almost to delirium, mingled with its fearful realities, that he could not convey by words any adequate idea of his sufferings than a sick man is able to disentangle and reconcile the various elements which fill the least coherent of dreams.



He was saved, however, after he had been eighteen hours in the water; he was picked up by a boat sent for that purpose by a ship, one of whose crew had descried something floating helplessly on the waters—upon a closer scrutiny had discovered that *something* to be a man.

The first sounds which greeted Temple's ears, when, after a stupor of some hours' duration, he was restored once more to consciousness, were anything but encouraging. He tried to make use of his eyes—they were closely blindfolded—of his hands, to remove the bandage—they were confined by a wiry sash or cord, and his arms were pinioned. But the sound of feet, stamping above his head, acquainted him at once that he was not on deck. His clothes were gone, and he was wrapped in some ambiguous garment, and laid at length (he felt as if *laid out*) in a berth, the noisomeness of whose odours it is not in the power of decent language to describe. The sentences which he gathered were spoken in a sort of *Lingua Franca*,—a mixture of bad Portuguese, French and the Negro jargon. He had become familiar with it during his residence in Jamaica, enough to comprehend as much of its meaning as was conveyed in the following conversation,—and he began to think, as he listened, that it would have been better for him had he fallen a prey to the sea, than into the hands of false brethren.

"What shall we do with this fellow, now we have got him?"

"Knock him on the head at once!"

"Give him a dose, and overboard with him," said another voice.

"What!—and poison the poor fish?—stick a knife through him say I!"

"Starve him, a proper punishment for coming among us with such empty pockets. Something we must do, to keep our hands in practice."

"We had as well have let him drown then," said a fifth speaker—O how Walter blessed him for his mercy! "He's a strong-limbed fellow—suppose we let him take his choice?"

"I don't admire these chance recruits,—there's no depending upon them."

"We have never had one who knew how to respect an oath. San José! don't you remember how that little Frenchman served us, your countryman, Hilaire?"

"No protégé of mine. It did him little good, he! he! he! don't you remember how he wriggled after Tomaso had stabbed him?"

"Pooh! let him live if he likes—he will be all the better,

and we shall be none the worse. It will be easy to take him off whenever we please."

"You need not trouble yourselves," said the first speaker, approaching the berth where Walter lay, who was sensible of his hot and spirit-reeking breath; "he is dying; he has not moved for the last three hours."

"He *shall* not die!" said the gentler voice, which had spoken only once before, and in language a shade less corrupt than the rest; "I claim my privilege."

"And wherefore now, comrade?"

"He is my countryman; I have read the papers in his pocket-book, and I have reasons for what I say. When we get nearer Kingston I can tell you more."

"And so we are to have the pleasure of keeping him and physicking him too, while we are cruising about. Leave him to me, and I will settle him with an Alpha-and-Omega of a dose! he! he! he!"

By this time, Walter's senses were fully awake, and his spirits with them. He had heard enough to convince him that he had fallen into the worst possible hands; but the training of his early manhood, during the time which he spent with Colonel Levison, had not been without its use in inuring him to danger and vicissitude,—and his terror, now that the danger was known, gave way to cool and vigorous watchfulness. He felt that his life hung, as it were, upon a thread, which might, at any moment, be severed by the caprice of others. Could he only take an observation of the speakers, he thought it would be easier to shape out some plan to be pursued. He first tried to slip his hands from the boards which tied them—in vain—the knots had been fastened and double fastened by an expert sailor;—next, by the violent and suddenly raising his eye-brows, he endeavoured to push the scarlet handkerchief by which he was blinded, either up or down—(a certain dull light, streaming through its folds, acquainted him with its colour;—) but this was also fruitless: lastly, he turned himself round in his narrow berth, with almost noiseless dexterity, that he might remove that which veiled his eyes by rubbing his forehead against the bundle (for pillow) beneath his head. The contact was odious; but effected what he so much desired. When he had replaced himself in his former posture, a small crevice of clear light was revealed, between two twists of the handkerchief; and the last effort of his strength, fast failing before a return of his fever,—brought on no doubt by the night he had passed in the water,—was to look eagerly and fearfully out, and behold what was passing around, or rather beneath him.

If his dread was, for one moment, renewed in all its first ter-

rible intensity, he may be forgiven,—for surely never did human eye look upon a group more horrible than the one which was seated round the cabin-table. Every one of the company might have passed for an inhabitant of the infernal regions. There were six in number, and the countenance of each one was hideous, as much from the fiendish depravity of its expression, as the deformity of features by which the most of them were distinguished. One had lost his right eye in an affray;—one had been half blown up by some unforeseen explosion; and half of his face was fearfully lacerated;—a third, an enormous negro, was disfigured by a loathsome wen which doubled the swell of his throat at one side. But the only one whose features were sound and regular, was, to Walter's thinking, the most diabolical looking of the company, pale, thin, and cadaverous, with small restless, reddish cruel eyes, and a face utterly devoid of hair. He was one fitted to preside over, and enjoy the terrors of a chamber of torture:—his countenance had lost every trait of human feeling, and was more fearful, from this ghastly apathy, than the bloated and bestial visages of his comrades. The other two were worthy to belong to such a fair company. Nor was their dress of the sea;—it was too fine and too fanciful to be the costume, of a hearty, unsophisticated sailor. Each of them wore a sash or shawl about his waist. The negro's head was decorated with a splendid blue velvet cap, with a long peak, which hung down upon one shoulder. Their pistols and daggers were of the finest workmanship, with stock, and hilt, and scabbard, magnificently ornamented and inlaid. Two of them, instead of common shirts, wore garments of striped silk of gaudy colours, and the pale cruel looking man, ear-rings of massive gold. The cabin, as far as Temple was able to remark its appointments, corresponded with the costly style of their accoutrements. It was richly furnished, but filthy to the last degree of filthiness. The mahogany table had been hacked with knives,—the floor profusely stained with—it *might* be wine:—arms were hung in every corner, and on every projecting beam, and a strange hatchment-like device with the scull and cross-bones painted upon a blood red field was suspended against one of the bulk-heads. It was pricked in a thousand places with dagger wounds. There was no mistaking the nature of the ark which had sheltered him.

The hour must have been late, for the feasters, one by one dropped into berths, leaving the thin bloodless man alone in the cabin. Temple once or twice fancied that he saw his head turned towards the spot where he was laid, and fancied that his hand was as often upon the dagger at his waist. There

was caution as well as cruelty in every line of his face, and the young man's blood ran cold, at the bare thought of falling asleep, while such a one was waking. At last, however, he too seemed disposed to settle for the night, as, wrapping himself up in a long cloak of fine blue cloth, all stiff and stained with large dark spots, he threw himself upon a sort of couch, and was presently asleep.

All was now quiet:—it is during such pauses that the sense of peril, past, present, or to come, is felt in all its tremendous fullness; and Temple may be excused, if his heart beat quicker than it had ever beaten before. He could not but imagine the scenes of bloodshed and licence which had been acted in that cabin;—its very air had a slaughter-house scent qualified with the odour of the decaying fumes of spirits:—and the thought came over him, that, in case of the tenderest mercy being extended towards him, he might be left to lie there and be starved. It was now four and twenty hours since he had tasted any food, and the exposure to wind and wave, together with so long a fast, so wrought upon him, that in the course of half an hour, he relapsed into a state of stupor, haunted, to his last moment of consciousness, by a resolution not to sleep, lest that pale fiend-like looking man should awake, and strangle him while he was sleeping.

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The broad blazing sun of the Tropics was setting in the fulness of his magical glory, when Temple, whose malady had kept him prostrate for many weeks, was permitted once more to breathe the fresh air, after he had again and again reiterated his frantic petition either to be killed at once, or allowed to come forth from that horrible cabin. Why he had been suffered to live, and even nursed with some rude care, he could not guess, unless it were from the expectation, on the part of the captors, of his being able to pay handsomely for his freedom. Once or twice, indeed, Fancy had suggested to him that they might be sparing him for the deliberate luxury of torture, but reason rejected the supposition as being beyond even their villany. There was more show of marine discipline on the deck than in the cabin. Everything was scrupulously clean, and the crew looked like sailors. The principal officers, with whose faces and voices he had become familiar during his long confinement, were dressed in less fanciful attire than when he last beheld them. Altogether, to be once more under the cope of Heaven, and out of sight of the impurities of the den below, was an unspeakable relief. The one-eyed man, who had been Walter's chief attendant, had even arranged a pile of sails cushion-wise, and motioned him to occupy them. The presence

of the invalid on deck seemed to create a sensation among the assembled groups, for, in the same horrible jargon he had heard before, his conductor said, laying his hand upon the negro's shoulder:—"I told you, Victor, we should cure him."

"I hear an English tongue!" exclaimed Temple, yearning to break the long silence he had been compelled to maintain, (his attendants having utterly refused to answer any questions) —"Is there any one here who can speak to me in my own language?"

"Go to him, Frank, and tell him what you have to say," said the negro, who seemed to be chief in command; and the one-eyed man came immediately and seated himself beside Temple. The rest of the men were each of them lazily occupied, some playing at cards, squatted on the deck like savages:—some straining their eyes, by looking through their spy-glasses to see whether island or sail was arising to break the monotonous line of the horizon. Some were cleansing their pistols;—the pale man (whose name was Hilaire) was sitting apart from the rest, intently plaiting a tight rope of very small thongs, and occasionally comparing it with the lash of an enormous whip which lay beside him.

The conversation between Walter and his neighbour began with a simple question, on the part of the latter:—

"Are you better for the air?"

"Thank God, I live!—It is to you that I am indebted for being well nursed."

"The other bowed slightly,—and Walter became the catechist.

"You are English, then;—from what part of the kingdom?"

"No matter—if I am your countryman, is it not enough?"

"What is the name of your ship?—whither is she bound?"

"You had better ask the Captain, over yonder, to inform you."

"What do you trade in?"

The man said nothing, but put aside the sails, and pointed to a dark brown patch on the deck.

Some how or other, Walter augured not ill from his demeanour, which, though rude, appeared assumed, it might be for the purpose of concealing softer and better feelings than he chose to avow. He was resolved to follow up the idea. "You are not fit for your trade," said he, "if you do not like to name it. How soon will you put me on shore? I can pay handsomely for my passage, when I reach Kingston."

"You will be expected so to do, if you ever get there," was the reply.

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"I gathered from your talk in the cabin that you are bound for Kingston. Honestly now, I am on board a free-trader, and in your power:—when will you put me ashore,—and at what price?"

His frankness seemed to make his way, for the other replied, "It is well that no one else on board can understand how free-spoken you are. You must bridle your curiosity, or you will get into quarrels;—and I having preserved your life, am answerable with my own for any mischief you bring among us."

"You have preserved my life:—I will show myself not ungrateful. Has it been in danger from aught besides fever?"

"Look around you, and you have your answer. You had better know where you are, as soon as possible. One of two things happens to every one who sleeps a night on board *La Fortuna*, either to join our band for better and worse, or to make his peace with his God, before he tries how low he can sink in the blue water. On the spot where you are sitting, I have seen two women stabbed,—in cold blood too: you have seen the traces of the murder. Look at *Hilaire* yonder, who is sitting so quietly in the sunset. He was the first to strike them, as he had been the first to"—

"And you talk of such hellish doings as matters of course?"

"Must I warn you again, Mr. Temple, not to be so free-spoken, and to calculate how much your life is worth. What would you say if the usual alternative were proposed to you? There is a vacancy in our number?"

"How is it that you know my name?—Is yonder pale line on the horizon, *Jamaica*?"

"Why, you are more of a conjuror than I! to guess the name of yonder stripe of cloud-land. I only read through letters which I found in your pocket, and you may bless your God that I did so, for it has given you a chance for your life. Don't speak so loud, or you may feel the weight of *Hilaire's* lash:—Christ! I remember the first day, when the sight of streaming blood made me as sick as death!"

"There is better nature in you than you choose or dare to avow. How was it that my letters saved my life?"

"Why, Mr. Temple," replied the man, in a more English tone than he had yet used;—"I know a good deal about you. I lived many years at *Levison Court*!—If I were only there again, bad as it was!"

"Merciful Providence!" exclaimed *Walter*, "and to have fallen upon you in this way:—what a fate has been mine!"

"You are the first of my countrymen who has fallen into my hands since I took to the roving life two years ago, and I was

bound to do my best for you;—but I warn you that that best is not much; and when I looked into your letters, and saw the old names, and old places mentioned, I could hardly believe my eyes. My name is Waldron;—I was long ago groom to Colonel Levison. Have you strength enough to listen to a long story?"

"Tell me!—I am impatient to hear. Am I then to be haunted by that fiend and his doings all the rest of my days?"

"Well then, use your ears well, as this may be the only opportunity we may have of speaking together;—my comrades are very suspicious. You are now partner with Arnold, the rich merchant of ———. You had courage enough to break loose from his snares. I must tell my tale to some one before I die!"

Walter, full of wonder, with a mute gesture of his head invited the other to proceed,—and could hardly believe that he was a living man, and awake, and thousands of miles from home, as he listened to the following remarkable, and to him intensely exciting narrative.

"I have no time to waste in talking, and need not ask you whether you know Dale Parish. But do you remember a blacksmith's shop—an ash tree grows over it, just before you come to the finger post, where the Levison Court road turns off?"

"Enough—I know it well."

"I was born there, thirty years ago—you would not think that I was no older—on the same day with a sister. I was to be brought up to my father's trade;—she was to go out to service. But I was always of a haughty masterful temper—the most mischievous and boldest of all the boys on the country side;—and then I was never properly seen after. I hated the heat and the clatter of the forge, as soon as I could speak,—and declared that I would go to sea. My father would not hear of it;—twice I ran away, and twice I was brought back, and beaten within an inch of my life. My mother was dead, and my sister, by ill-luck, put to service with Mrs. Levison, who took a fancy to her as soon as she was born, and would have her called after herself."

"The Colonel's mother?"

"The same, Sir. If there was ever any one who had the wickedness of others to answer for, it was that woman—you know that as well as I. Well, it seems the Colonel heard that I had a spice of the devil in my composition;—he liked to have such about him,—and he sent for me, and flattered me up to take service with him, and it was a fine thing for a wild vagabond young fellow to have horses to gallop the country over, and plenty to drink—and—but you know all about that, too, and

how he expected every one under him to serve him body and soul. I had not been with him five years, when he began to take a fancy to my sister, who was as pretty a girl as you would wish to see. She was not the only one, by many, whom the Colonel ruined. The old lady was fully as bad—for she upheld him in all his wicked ways, and would see and hear and believe nothing, while the neighbourhood was ringing with his doings. My sister was ruined,—and he used her like the brute that he was. One day he gave her such a blow on the breast, as she will carry the mark of to her grave. At last she was so worn out, that she was contented to marry that gallows-bird Vial—a pretty marriage it was! But, before they managed it among them, bad as I was, when it came out about Florence, I could not abide any longer in the Colonel's service, for all he paid me such high wages; and, besides, I wanted to see foreign parts,—so nothing would serve me but I must quit him and go to sea. To sea I went;—what was there to keep me on shore? my father, hard as he was, was dead—my sister ruined for life! I entered as a common sailor on board the *Jane*, West Indiaman—and the seven years I passed there were the roughest and happiest of my life, and something like the most respectable, though nothing to boast of. During this time, my sister and Vial were settled in ———. Vial had quarrelled with his master, and taken to driving hackney coaches—and when I came home, it was some comfort to find her with a house over her head. Poor Florence! I wonder where she is now?"

"I got on so well in the seafaring line—for I liked the life—that when the mate of the *Jane* died, I took his place under Captain Durham—as good a man, that was, as ever lived, and as good a sailor as ever left port. When I returned from the first voyage I took as mate, as proud as could be, and went to my sister's house, I found her in great trouble; her husband had run away from her—the truth was, that she had been lurked back by Colonel Levison, who dared not lose sight of one who was so deep in his secrets. I was heartily glad to find the fellow gone—for him and me never could agree, and he was always bringing up old times, and talking how the Colonel durst not break with him after all. He had been away several months and never written to Florence, nor sent her a penny. But the night before we sailed, he came back again,—a curse upon him! it has made a devil of me! and I was so near being a respectable man!" He gnashed his teeth with agony as he spoke, and paused—Walter took breath, and, after a moment's respite, the other went on more minutely.

"It's just like yesterday, the night of his coming back. My sister and I were sitting together over the fire—it was Christ-



mas time, three years ago. I had her two lads upon my knee, and was somehow or other sorrier than usual to leave her. She had made shift to keep herself by washing and sewing, and I was leaving her all the money I could spare—for if she had come to want, I could not answer for what she might do. We were just then talking of Colonel Levison's sudden death—she had even said: 'I suppose I shall have my husband back again,' when a knock came to the door;—I got up and opened it, and there stood Yial!

"Poor silly creature! what a noise she made about him, and how glad she was to see him, as if he had been the best husband in the world, instead of using her like a brute, as he did. He was decently dressed in mourning, and began fairly enough by asking pardon of her, and putting a couple of guineas into her hand. He knew how to flatter her round—for he kissed her, and was so fond as never was. But I knew, by his eye, that he was not a bit in earnest,—and he winked at me as if he had something to say she was not to hear; and he persuaded her to go to bed, as she was to be up betimes in the morning to give me my breakfast. As soon as she was gone, he ran across the street to a dram shop, and brought in a bottle of brandy, and said we would have a comfortable glass of grog together, and talk of old times. I knew that the fellow wanted something particular of me, by his cunning look. If I had got up, and gone out of the house, all would have been well. No sooner was she fairly in bed, and the house all quiet, than he turned upon me and suddenly said:

"'Waldron, my good fellow, I will make your fortune, if you will help me to get a friend of mine over the water; you are going to sail to-morrow, arn't you?' said he.

"'I am,' said I, 'but you know I can't do nothing without the Captain's consent.'

"'Devil take you and your Captain both!' said he, 'you are the same fearless Frank Waldron that you used to be, I suppose, and will ask no questions, and pocket the money. If you should find out who he is, when you are out at sea, you will not blazon it out.' He counted out a hundred pounds upon the table, all in bank notes. 'Here, will this argument be of any use?'

"'I own I always loved money; but I could not make up my mind at once. 'What is you friend's name?' said I, 'I will have no half secrets!'

"'You shall find out for yourself, and keep it when you have found it. Come, a bargain—or not? Take a last look at the money, if you cannot say and *swear* Yes, before I count *five*.'

"'Fool that I was! the money got the better of me, and once

I was resolved—I determined to know no more than I could help. Our plan was soon made up;—we were to set off before day-break, the next morning. Vial was to come with us in the boat, and pull it back, and the runaway lie down in the bottom of it, till we could get him on board, and then he was to be stowed away in the hold till we were out at sea. I was to face it out with the Captain as well as I could, and, if need, was to bribe him—for Vial said his friend had plenty of money about him.

“I could not sleep a wink that night, as you may guess, and was up and upon the pier a quarter of an hour before the time. There was no one to be seen, and I was just beginning to hope they would not come, when I heard something close alongside of me,—and there was Vial and his friend wrapped up from top to toe, in a long dark cloak.

“The Jane had dropped down to the Rock with the afternoon’s tide—so that we had to row out to her. We made free with a boat which Vial was to get back somehow or other; and by ill-luck it was a keen starlight night—so that we managed to steer tolerably straight for the ship. No sooner had we fairly pushed off, than Vial’s friend rose up in the boat, and laying his hand upon my shoulder, said:

“‘Are not you afraid to start on a voyage in company with a dead man?’”

“I leaped up, as if I had been shot. God above us! it was that wicked Colonel Levison! I would rather have put to sea with the Devil himself on board!”

“It was?”

“You shall hear. How they laughed at my fright! and the Colonel made a fine joke of it! how he had not been really dead, but only in a sort of trance, they call it—and Vial and he had managed the cheat as cleverly as never was—that Vial was up to any roguery—and how they had got up another body, and smuggled it into the coffin;—and how the Colonel had disguised himself—none knew better than he how to masquerade it; and how it was safest to be near the fire when the chimney smoked—and he had fairly himself driven the hearer down to Levison Court. He was a mad fellow! the crazier the thing the better he liked it.”

“Do you mean to tell me,” said Walter whose agitation was too great to permit his fully understanding the man’s words at once, “that you took out Colonel Levison—the wicked Colonel—to the Jane?”

“Have you not heard me! I was all in a flutter, as you may suppose; but I had sworn an oath I durst not break, and there was nothing for it but to go through with the business. We

got him on board finely—for the man who was on deck was more than half asleep, and almost all the crew and the Captain had gone ashore for the last night. I hid him in the hold among some empty barrels, and gave him a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine. I thought the night would never be gone!

"It did go, however; and the Captain came on board, and we weighed anchor, and were off with as fair a wind as ever blew. All that day and the next I felt I don't know how. I was never more wretched in my life,—half hoping, half fearing that it would be found out, and not daring to say a word to any body. He lay snug, however—I wonder how he bore it so long—till the evening of the second day, when land was out of sight. I was just considering how I should break the matter to the Captain, when, lo, and behold! he was beforehand with me. I was standing alone, when he comes sharp up upon me:

" 'Frank Waldron,' says he, 'who is this that you have hid among the barrels?'

"I knew him well—and that it was of no use to tell a lie;—so I just told him that it was a friend of mine, who was in a little trouble, and wanted to slip quietly out to Barbadoes.

" 'We'll have him out,' said the Captain, pleasantly, 'and take a look at him. I don't admire such doings on board the Jane; but if he be a friend of yours, Waldron, I suppose we must say as little about it as we can help. Hollo, there! you in the hold! come up, and let us see what you are like!'

"I heard a lumbering sound below, and, a minute after, some one coming slowly up the companion ladder. The Captain ran forward eagerly:

" 'By all that's holy!' cried he, staggering back, as pale as a sheet, 'do you know what you have done? This is no friend of yours. Waldron, this is—I would rather have the Devil himself on board, a thousand times rather!—this is that fellow Levison! I know him for all his wig and roquelaire. If you have done this knowingly, you are mistaken. I would not sail a knot farther with such a freight. We will put back at once. Stand back, fellow!—you are not fit to touch an honest sailor, let alone a gentleman! Hollo! Swainson, is there never a pair of irons on board! I take you prisoner, Sir, in his Majesty's name,' and he clapped his hand on the Colonel's shoulder."

"Then Captain Durham recognised the passenger at once!" inquired Temple, as soon as his lips, parched with the intensity of his interest, could mutter the words.

"To be sure; they had been acquainted long ago—and Captain Templeton was another of the set; and Durham's brother was a justice of the peace, and had issued warrants against the

Colonel. Folks were beginning to find him out.—But that's neither here nor there. When he found out that there was no hiding himself:—

“ ‘Captain Durham,’ says he, with his hand in his bosom. ‘I have five hundred pounds here—a thousand—they shall be yours if—’

“ ‘To the devil with you and your money!’ cried Durham whose blood was fairly up. He sprung upon the Colonel, and caught him by the collar of the threadbare coat he had put on to disguise himself in. It ripped in his hand as if it had been so much paper.

“ ‘To the devil with *you*!’ cried Levison drawing a pistol suddenly, and flinging the Captain off him—for he was the stronger of the two. He cocked it,—and shot Durham through the head—the poor fellow fell like a log, and it was all over with him!

“ ‘Bad as I had been, this was more than I could stand; so I ran forward; the rest of the fellows—the cowards!—were staring this way and that, as if they did not know who else’s turn it was to come next. But he drew out another pistol, and pointed it at me. His finger was on the trigger.

“ ‘Another step, and you are a dead man!’ Speak to those blockheads, *Captain Waldron*! and try what a handful of gold-a-piece will do towards shutting their mouths.’

“ ‘I don’t know how it was,—but he was never so gallant, never looked so like a gentleman as when he had just done one of his black jobs, as he used to call them. The men were terrified by his determination, and some of them won over by the sight of the gold. For my part, I felt as if the sea was giving way under us, and going to swallow us up:—there lay my poor Captain’s body, fast growing cold. But he knew how to manage every body;—and he drew me aside a bit, and cajoled and bribed, and threatened, till I did not know upon whose legs I was standing; and, before morning, he had brought us all round, save about a dozen of the crew, and them he started off in the long boat, with a keg of biscuit and a barrel of water; and he bade them be sure and remember his face, that they might keep the barrels for him, till he met them again.

“ ‘Well, to make a long story short, we were to set up as free traders. We ran right for Savannah at once, to pick up our crew. The Colonel kept a sharp eye upon the Englishmen, and it was wonderful how they dropped off;—some were lodged in a house where they caught the yellow fever. I am the only one left alive,—it seems as if I could not die!’ But, look at Hilaire yonder,—how he watches us! my life upon it, there’s something in it! He was the first who joined;—the Colonel:

had a particular knack in hunting such out. I could lay down a dead man for every day of the month that he had a hand in despatching. He has a positive thirst for blood, and has been at me again and again about you. Would you believe it! he never lies down to sleep without his rosary somewhere about him."

"But the Colonel, Waldron,—what become of him? Surely, Waldron, *he is not on board!*"

"He!—I would hang myself first!" replied the other, with an unfeigned look of horror. "No, he got us into the scrape at Savannah, as I told you, and when he had taken his first cruise with us, and lined his pockets pretty well, left us to shift for ourselves. We were all glad to get rid of him; he had not a snuff of the sailor about him. He went ashore at Demerara, and we heard,—we dared not seek after him much, and did not care,—he had died of the fever. But believe it, who will, *I don't*. There is more work for him to do yet before he dies!"

"And you have followed this wild life ever since?"

"I have had no choice,—and as long as we only—but I am going to let you into none of our secrets. Look, Hilaire has done! and we must make haste and finish too. I will tell you, however, on what terms you have been let to live:—each one of our crew has the right once in five years, to save the life of one of his countrymen, provided he can get him to join us, or make him do us some service. Now we have had bad luck lately, and our guns are—deuce take me!—Hector, yonder negro, has laid a plan for a land robbery. I must be quick:—there is a rich English widow, none other than Mrs. Levison. You have been at her house;—it is somewhere on the shore—you are expected"—

But at that moment, the Frenchman drew close to the speaker. Waldron rose, and began to pace the deck, singing aloud,—and every now and then glancing his eye towards Walter, to see how this communication was working. He then addressed a few words to Hilaire, and drew him off toward another part of the vessel, leaving Temple in a condition neither to move nor speak. His story had been so miraculously strange in its coincidence with Walter's history, no less than as a tale of adventure,—and its conclusion as respected Colonel Levison's death, so utterly unsatisfactory, that it was not to be forgotten by the listener, who felt as if he was to be followed by a spell all his life; and that the spirit of that wicked man, (or his real presence) was to be permitted to reappear upon the earth again and again, like one of the demons in a goblin tale, who haunt the earth at stated periods, for their iniquitous purposes. And his speculations upon this point were so engross-

ing as entirely, for the moment, to divert his thoughts from the present peril of his situation.

Presently, however, the full consciousness of the predicament in which he stood, came back upon him with appalling force. Waldron's last words implied a price to be paid for his life, against which every feeling revolted. It was hard, so young as he was, to have to decide between death and degradation; and though it would be an insult to his uprightness to say that his mind wavered for an instant, he retired to his berth that night in a state of miserable perplexity. In the morning he was worse again, and unable to rise from it; he was now sedulously watched—the crew obviously began to suspect him. La Fortuna was rapidly nearing Kingston, when, towards the close of the day, the breeze which had been bearing her thither, with a fleet of other homeward bound vessels not far behind, died suddenly away, and a dead calm ensued with all its distressing consequences; the land was now distinctly visible, and, by the aid of powerful telescopes, people walking thereon were to be discerned.

Walter's illness was not counterfeited. The anxiety awakened by Waldron's story was preying upon his mind, and increasing the low fever which had not yet left him. Never was man born with a more iron constitution than his, or he must have sunk under so many relapses. He thought the day would never go over, though he could not wish it to pass more quickly, when every hour brought the crisis of his fate so much nearer:—and between weariness and suspense, he was almost ready to pray for death as his only possible deliverer from a situation, the danger of which appeared so hopelessly menacing. Evening came on;—the cabin was occupied by the usual party, who rarely were to be found sober within an hour after one of their voracious repasts. Walter's sense of hearing was sharpened by fever, and every word of blasphemous ribaldry which they uttered seemed to eat into his ears.

"I say, Waldron, we will wait no longer!—either we will have this fellow among us, or he shall walk the plank;—we will know to-morrow. But I see no use to give him the liberty of choice. He's one of your righteous youths, depend upon it!—who will prefer a hammock and a stone, to the delights of wine, women, and a free trade."

"You be —, Hilaire!" replied Waldron roughly. "He was brought up in the same school with me;—there's not a bolder heart nor a stronger arm on board;—hand over the brandy."

Their conversation went on in much the same strain, and was followed by a carouse even deeper than usual. Ere long

all were asleep—even the lynx-eyed Hilaire, who had hitherto seemed past the power of the strongest potations, yielded;—and, closing his eyes, fell back stupidly in his chair. At that moment, a slight, a very slight sound was wafted in through the sky-light. Trifling as it was, it reached an ear whose natural sense was wonderfully acute:—it was the plash of oars. Never until then had Temple known the intensity, the agony of prayer. O that it might be no delusion!—no fancy born of vain expectation!—It was repeated,—and louder—and the drunken men slept on. It was impossible to calculate how near it might be;—presently, however, a voice through a speaking trumpet hailed those on board the *Fortuna*. Walter could lie still no longer,—the chance was a desperate one,—but it was for life. To get clear of the cabin, he must pass over the negro, and another, whose huge bodies, half slid from their chairs, were lying in the relaxed attitudes of brutal slumber. With a desperate effort, for his frame was quivering with fever, he sprung up—he descended cautiously—two steps and a half were successfully accomplished, and he stood among the prostrate bodies—he manned himself for the last and longest. The boat must be alongside, for the sound had ceased, and some one was heard saying in an English voice, “Is Captain Vanderkemp on board the *Rotterdam*?” (*La Fortuna* having assumed the discreet semblance and name of a Dutch West Indiaman.)

Another effort, and he was at the door, issuing forth.—No—a sudden thought struck him, and he absolutely mustered courage to step back, and seize a sword, which hung beside the grisly hatchment already mentioned. He touched pale Hilaire with his foot, who grinned and gibbered, and half started up;—but the deed was done,—the weapon was in the hand that well knew how to wield it, and so much of the peril overcome. With a last tremendous exertion of his fast-failing powers, he swung to the heavy iron plated cabin door—locked it. In another minute he was upon deck,—and the enormous bunch of keys plashed down, many a fathom deep, in the ocean.

His prayer *had* been heard—for, by blessed good fortune he made his way to the gangway alongside which the boat had run—it was the work of a moment.—“Put back! put back!” shouted he, in his loudest voice, springing as he spoke upon the head of a man, who was ascending, and who was thrown down with himself.—“Put back!—row for your lives!—this is a pirate!”

All this was reiterated, ere the crew, like their officers, half intoxicated, and stupified by so sudden an exhibition of energy on the part of a dying man, could think, or so much as lay a

hand on him. In another instant they were clustering like bees upon the gangway ladder,—an instant too late!

Walter seized a handspike, and pushed off; and almost ere the crew of the boat, amongst whom he had alighted like a vision, could ask a question, or point to their fleet—O sight of joy!—lying between the rover and the land, now visibly near—they were a fathom's length on their way towards safety. Those they left behind found enough to do in understanding what had happened, and in contriving the release of their imprisoned officers,—whose rage was proved, by the dead body of Waldron, stabbed in a dozen places, being washed up on the sands of a lonely quay, a few days after this blessed and almost miraculous escape,—so that their chace was presently abandoned; and the goodly merchantmen who received their late prisoner were too formidable in force to be attacked so near the shore. In the night the breeze sprung up again, and by day-break, La Fortuna was left far behind them—for ever!

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## PART IX.

### THE CONCLUSION.

THE last escape has been described as hurriedly as it happened, and as confusedly as it was remembered. So sudden was it,—so un hoped for,—so providentially permitted,—so complete and rapturous was the change from the loathsome cabin of the Rover, and her hideous crew, to the order and neatness of the merchantman,—and so profound the exhaustion which succeeded efforts of strength so disproportioned to the powers of a frame already weakened by illness, that it is not to be wondered if time brought to the convalescent no clearer idea of his peril, than is represented in the sketch I have attempted. When he *did* look back, however, his gratitude and wonder at his own safety (to which the confusion of the moment, and the disabled state of the pirate's guns had mainly contributed,) amounted almost to positive pain, and with this mingled a feeling of sincere and poignant concern, when the fate of Waldron was made known to him by Surgeon Huntley's description of the body, which he had been called upon to examine.—He felt that the life of a fellow-creature had paid the ransom of his own,—and that he was bound to show, that that



ransom had not been paid in vain, and to exert the energies restored to him, well and worthily.

We must leave him, revelling in the full possession of this liberty—alas! purchased by blood;—to look upon the thralldom of another, upon whom misfortunes fell with a double weight, inasmuch as they were not met by any strength of mind. This was Castro, who, as may have been gathered, had been charged with Walter's murder by Vial, and imprisoned as soon as ever he set foot on British ground,—a doleful welcome in a strange land! There was no want of facts to corroborate the testimony of the serving-man—such as the obvious antipathy which the prisoner had always showed towards Temple,—and his having been perceived gliding about the deck, a few moments before the sound of the plash in the water, which awakened the attention of the steersman, was heard;—and Vial's evidence that he had seen the deed done, was brief, precise, and not to be shaken by any cross examination.

And yet, somehow or other, it often happens, that popular sympathy gives to the criminal what it deducts from his accuser, and that pity for the severity of his punishment at once extinguishes the sense of the enormity of his offence. There were some to-whom the tale was told, who ascribed Castro's enmity towards Temple, to the natural indignation of one of haughty spirit, against the man who has basely deceived him. Walter was accused first of having jilted the lady himself, and then of interfering to prevent her marrying another. These pitted the irritable and moody Portuguese, upon whom the loneliness and suspense of captivity preyed so heavily,—were resigned to the loss of one, whose prosperity was making so many prophecies of none effect,—and vented a full measure of displeasure upon the informer. Many of Vial's old wild exploits were raked up to prove that he had been, if he was not now, a most profligate character,—totally unworthy of credence:—"A man, who had left his own wife in a dying state, and offered to marry a rich Creole, while she was yet alive—" (Rumour always makes the most of offences)—"was he to swear away the life of a gentleman and a stranger!—Why then, nobody would be safe."

This was the opinion adopted by Mrs. Lesage, who, for some caprice's sake, which would appear inexplicable to those who have never studied "the little ways of men,"—bestowed upon the prisoner as much good sympathy and regard, as she had formerly lavished upon Temple. Him she began to denounce as a regular adventurer,—“she wished that she could believe him to be crazy:—(as she had been formerly told, on the best possible authority,) for after he had paid such devoted attention

to that weak coquettish Mrs. Levison, (and how any man could was a wonder!)—then to put obstacles in the way of her marriage with another, might have been explained away upon that supposition, but was inexcusable now.”—She was the more inclined to pass such a severe judgment, because she was aware that Isabella, in her own private mind, took the part of the absent one;—and she had not attained that perfection in the art of manœuvring, at which point agreement, rather than contradiction, is employed to convince and to persuade. “It was her temper. She must speak out,—and she never spoke from prejudice!—She thought much worse of Mr. Temple than she used to do,” and wound up every discourse on the subject with a sigh, and a “Poor Castro!”

She even went to the length of imagining that Isabella’s peremptory and final rejection of Mr. Towerham’s attentions when they amounted to addresses, was occasioned by some secret reservation of herself and fortune—but for a dead man?—No matter; the last half of her fancy could not drive the first moiety from its ground: and, to crown her bad humour, Isabella, having remained at Bath to witness the celebration of Cicely Royston’s wedding, declared herself satiated with its pleasures, and returned to our town, as she had left it, a single woman. Her little lively friend had made her own a dashing Captain of the Guards, with a splendid figure, a well filled purse, and a *Sir* at the head of his name; and Mrs. Lesage was often in doubt whether it was the greater trial to hear the deliberate Mrs. Arnold descant upon the happiness of her sister, Lady George Raylton, or her pompous Lord and master regret his invaluable partner and friend, “poor young Temple!” in words of many syllables, but no real feeling.

\* Isabella had promised to meet the bride and bridegroom at Dale Hall, when they returned from their wedding journey, and was only waiting for their summons to shake the dust of the town from her feet, and to refresh her spirits with the sights and scents of the country, now teeming with the profuse beauty of summer,—when the quietness of her heart was suddenly, and somewhat rudely disturbed;—but we will be more circumstantial.

Doctor Goodrich was, one very hot day, wending his way homeward, so fagged by a long round of visits which he had been paying on foot, that he wondered as he went whether it was in the power of any surprise to quicken his pace, or to arouse him to further exertion of mind or body,—when some one suddenly ran against him, and, ere he could lift up his head to see who it was, overwhelmed him with a torrent of apologies. It was Mr. Arnold.

"Very sorry, Doctor," said he, as soon as he had recovered his breath, "extraordinarily concerned at my own rudeness; but I have been so amazingly surprised to-day; I am hardly myself; my nerves have received so severe a shock—(Doctor Goodrich smiled mentally at the burlesque of the idea of the merchant's nerves)—my friend and partner, poor Temple!"

"Ah, poor fellow!" said the other, saddened by the mention of his name, whom he mourned so sincerely, "it was but this time last year, that we were riding together along shore,—and he speaking so happily and hopefully of the future,—alas!"

"He is alive, Sir!" cried the other, who found it necessary to raise his voice, to obtain a hearing; "did you ever hear of such a thing?—a drowned man!—and alive after all!"

The Doctor was indeed amazed, when his first incredulity could be overcome;—smarting eyes, aching limbs, burning pavement,—all were forgotten, and, in the fullness of his joyful wonder, he whirled away his cane to the opposite side of the street—a gambol totally foreign to his usual discretion.

"Alive!—when?—where?—why?—how?—You don't say so! Alive after all! God bless me, but this is extraordinary and delightful! Alive! tell me all about it!"

"We know very little, Doctor—nearly as much in the dark as yourself. It is a most amazing case of preservation,—so far as they were from land, too!—and I should not have believed it, had I not warrant for it in his own hand-writing. See here,—dated—

Kingston, June 1st, 17—

"Dear Arnold,

"I am only this hour arrived in Kingston, very ill, and hardly able to write; but as I am on the point of sailing for England, in the Racehorse, and send this by the Harbinger, which has the advantage of a tide or two,—I will keep all particulars till we meet. Should she arrive before us, you will not think that a ghost is stalking into your office when I make my appearance there. I write this on my knee, in the greatest possible haste—and married to Mrs. Levison, who accompanies me to England. See Castro immediately, and tell him I am distressed at the thought that he has been put to restraint on my account. The fault was in my own drowsiness. God bless you. W. T.

"I hope you are satisfied with the result of my voyage."

"And married to Mrs. Levison! that is the greatest wonder of all," said the Doctor, "for, in spite of what everybody said, I could not help fancying that he had cooled in his attention

owards her before they sailed,—and suspecting what he suspects—it cannot be!”

“Ah, Doctor! why *will* you always be wiser than your neighbours? You never would believe one when I told you that I knew it would be, and thought this Castro little better than an impostor.”

“Why, indeed—let me look again: yes—it is *married to*—and there is no counterfeiting this bad queer hand-writing. Well, he can afford to do one thing ill;—but are there no further particulars to be had from anybody?”

“I can hear none—you know as much as I do now—but I expect the Racehorse every tide, and then we shall hear everything.”

“I am sorry for Castro, though;—does he know it yet?”

“Know it! I made all possible haste to tell him—for, though I don’t like the fellow, I was sorry for him in prison. If it had not been for that old Catholic priest, I think he would have lied. But, Lord bless me, Doctor, you never saw a man in such an awful passion! He flung his arms about and swore, and I thought would either knock me down, or knock his head against the wall. We shall have to bind him over to keep the peace.”

“Poor fellow! I cannot wonder at his being discomposed. If such a thing had happened to me, when I was going to be married to my wife—but cannot you come in and tell Mrs. Goodrich herself? she will be prodigiously delighted. Temple was always a prime favourite of hers.”

“I thank you; no, Sir,” replied Mr. Arnold, resuming his composure, “you may suppose that this extraordinary intelligence makes us very busy, especially after the arrangements I have made,—and I have wasted too much time already—so much is doing on ‘Change;—but I could not resist the temptation of stopping to tell you. I will send you a line by one of the boys, as soon as ever the Racehorse is heard of—” and away marched the monied man, brimful of his own importance, and his partner’s cleverness, and his partner’s wife’s fortune of a hundred thousand pounds. No fear of the stability of Arnold and Co. now!

So soon as they had shaken hands and parted, Doctor Goodrich rung his bell as it had never been wrung since that memorable night of November with which my story commences,—strode over the shrimp of a footboy, and rushed into the parlour, where his wife was sitting at work upon the peaceful pastime of her entire married life—an enormous patch-work quilt,—with such an impetuosity, that even she, unobservant as she was, could not but be aware that something unusual must have

happened—for she raised up her head, and stared at him with a remarkably disturbed and curious, “Dear me, Doctor!”

“Do you know, my dear,—you will be delighted to hear that our friend Temple is not drowned after all, and is coming home in the Racehorse as fast as he can come:—a married man too. Ha! Miss Lesage! I beg you ten thousand pardons, I did not see you before, I was so full of my news. I dare say you have not forgotten Mrs. Levison yet, with her long ringlets.”

Excellent Mrs. Goodrich was completely roused and astounded by the tidings; she arose,—and, forgetting the footstool which supported her feet, stood up a head taller than usual; the needle-work dropped from her hands, and was abandoned to the gamesomeness of a kitten, who was no respecter of hexagons. At last she ejaculated:

“Well to be sure!—dear me, Doctor!—and who is to marry that Mr. Castor?”

Isabella’s amazement was yet greater, and mingled with a feeling which closed her lips as with a clasp of iron. She was an unworthy heroine, for she neither fainted nor revealed her secret by any sudden outcry, nor even (it is said) turned *much* paler than usual, as she thought within herself: “Married to Mrs. Levison!—can it be? and after Mr. Le Beaumont’s letter?”

By this time, the party was increased by the addition of her aunt, who was full of the news which she had gathered after some original fashion of her own; she came in, in the midst of a full flow of her own comments and exclamations.

“Never heard anything so remarkable in all my days! never!—not drowned after all!—when they saw him!—O it’s a trick! I’ll not believe it! There seems no possibility of killing people now-a-days;—so much the better for those who are living!—And married to that Mrs. Levison!—it is positively shocking! just what I expected, however; I could see through his quarrel with Castro! I told you Isabella, love, what would be the end of it! Pity that some others could not see with my eyes a little earlier. Did you ever hear of such a thing, Mrs. Goodrich? isn’t it positively marvellous?”

“And dear me, Mrs. Lesage! who is to marry that Mr. Castor?”

“Castro—Ma’am—Castro. I have told you a thousand times Castor is oil. Why, he has a right to complain, with a vengeance! and, if he don’t *do* something as well as *say*, my name is not Lesage! They were engaged—engaged, to my certain knowledge, before they left England—I mean Temple and the lady. Well, Mr. Temple turns his back upon her,—no one can tell why—and to show her spirit—To think what it has all come to!—and this poor fellow shut up for these two months.

O it's shameful! and I hope he *will* call Mr. Temple to account, as soon as ever he comes on shore!"

Mrs. Lesage's ideas of the extent of the misery which Castro was sure to feel, were not so wide of the truth as the majority of her speculations. That passionate young man, whose naturally violent nature had been exasperated by the sudden blight which had fallen upon his hopes—the listless inactivity consequent on confinement, anxiety as to its result, and having to defend himself according to the laws of a strange country, in which everything appeared to him unjust—had burst into such a paroxysm of rage, upon the news being tenderly communicated to him by Mr. Arnold, that the merchant, being unused to make allowance for the fiery temperament of the South, imagined, and not without cause, that his reason was in danger. At one moment, he wept such profuse tears as no agony can extort from the eyes of an Englishman;—then he reiterated again and again his vows of vengeance. The lock of Sybil's hair, which he had worn close to his heart, he cast to the winds;—he dashed her unoffending picture into a thousand pieces. Never was liberty so ungraciously received, or so little valued. He cared not whither he went, or what became of him; and his demeanour was so fierce, and his aspect so unlike that of sanity, that those who passed him in the street, stared and shrunk back,—and the keeper of the hotel, to which he repaired upon his liberation, called a council of the entire household, to deliberate upon the propriety of a dark room, and a strait waistcoat.

So passed over a day and night, without bringing much abatement of the storm. He would hardly taste any food, and drove those who intruded upon him hither and thither with such violence, that when, towards noon, a person sought admittance, neither master nor man was willing to disturb "the strange gentleman," and the visitor was compelled, himself, and alone, to interrupt Castro's stern and gloomy reverie.

He was sitting with his back to the light, his elbows leaned upon a table, and his head covered with a perfect mat of thick black curly hair, supported upon his clenched hands. His dress had not been changed for the last many hours; his figure had grown frightfully thin during his imprisonment,—and when he lifted up his face, to pour a volley of oaths against the intruder, it was so sallow, and sharp, and wild, that even Vial, trebly hardened as he was, was, for a moment, shocked, and stood still.

His own guise, too, had undergone a complete metamorphosis. Since he had reached England, he had squandered all his money, which did not amount to much, as he was one of unthrifty as well as profligate habits, who spent as fast as he gained; and, popular odium, always strong against an informer, was, in

his case, increased by certain stories to his discredit, which began to transpire. - In short, by his debauched and intemperate habits he had rendered himself unfit for any hard labour, and no one would give him any lighter employment. He had been seen wandering about the town, each week a little shabbier than he had been in the foregoing one,—and, by this time, had parted with his last appearance of respectability, and stood before the Portuguese, in his true colours—a vulgar and cunning reprobate.

“What!” thundered Castro, springing up, as soon as he became aware of his guest’s identity, and throwing his chair to the furthest end of the room; “is it possible that you have the effrontery to appear in *my* presence? Get out, this instant, villain that you are!—out!—or you shall make your way through the window!” and he approached Vial with the full intention of putting his threat into execution.

“Come, Mr. Castro,” said the man, without showing the least fear, “you are very angry with me, and, I grant, with cause; but I have a rich amends to make you, and *will*, (speaking rapidly, lest his communication should be interrupted)—the Racehorse is outside.”

“You and your news go to ———!” cried Castro, furiously, seizing him by the collar.

“Stop, Sir, one moment, or you will repent to the end of your days!—Stop, Sir, and hear me! I can offer you such a revenge as no one else can—such a revenge as shall prevent Mr. Temple ever showing his face in England again. I know all, let me go, and I will tell you everything.”

“Revenge!” muttered Castro between his teeth, relaxing his grasp so suddenly, that Vial reeled after the chair. “Be quick, fellow! I will not be fooled with idle words!—speak out at once!”

“Colonel Levison is *alive*, Sir!” said the man, in a piercing whisper.

“And is this your wonderful revenge? Pooh! do you mean to bring up that bug-bear again, after having done your best to swear away my life? Begone, this instant! or I cannot answer for my hands keeping clear even of such a wretch as you are!”

But the other would be heard; and by coolly persisting in his purpose, gained his point. His tale, however, was so constantly interrupted by Castro’s exclamations, that, for clearness’ sake, it will be the best to attempt to give only the substance.

It was with an unabashed front that Vial laid open to the Portuguese, the scheme of villainy on which he had been acting

so long. It seemed that he had been the instrument of Colonel Levison's abominable purposes, so long as the latter had anything to give,—and gave an account of his supposed death and escape, up to the moment when the Jane had weighed anchor, which, when afterwards compared with Waldren's, as told to Walter Temple, corresponded with it in every point. Within twelve months from that time, his master and accomplice had reappeared under a disguise so complete, that his most intimate friends never once appeared to suspect the reality of his assumed character; this was aided, too, by his never remaining long in one place at a time. He had bound his servant to execute a deadly revenge upon Temple; it was hoped by both that the latter would have married Mrs. Levison previous to her leaving England, in which case, the fact of her husband being alive would have been revealed to them, and its concealment treated for; though Vial confessed that neither of them would have dared to make it publicly known, as the Colonel would, in such a case, have undoubtedly been transported, if not his life forfeited, for some of the manifold offences in which he had taken part. The servant-man confessed also, with the utmost deliberation, that, as his old master, if he were yet alive, was no longer able to purchase his secrecy, he was willing to transfer his services to Castro,—still for the purpose of being revenged upon Temple, for whom he had conceived an unquenchable hatred.

"Go on!" exclaimed Castro, when the tale was almost complete, "and so you propose to associate me with yourself in your revenge, and your notable plans of extorting money?"

Unawed by the bitter tone in which the sarcasm was uttered, Vial, possibly mistaking his auditor's quietness for assent, went on to say how that his accusation of Castro had been only to blind the eyes of others,—and that he should most certainly have absconded before the trial come on. Castro heard him to an end.—

"And is this all?" exclaimed he, while his eyes flashed fire, "is this *only* all? and you wish to engage me as a coadjutor in this precious scheme of yours?—and you imagine me idiot enough not to be able to discern truth from falsehood—and that I am so blind as not to see that the revenge is, and has been aimed not only at Mr. Temple, but at another—whom, in spite of her monstrous perjury—and you allow me an honourable participation in the mysteries of your trade, for the moderate compensation you have mentioned?—and I am to live upon the scrapings which I can extort from their terrors! You are a *little* wrong for once, it seems. Do you imagine that I—a gentleman, could, *condescend* to be polluted by your fellowship, by



breathing the same air with you, and consulting, and plotting, and chuckling together, as we counted our gains? I will try the truth of your story. If you will bring your news to market, it shall be in public; you shall repeat what you have said on board the Racehorse! and before a magistrate! Come along, Sir! and if you utter a word, I will shoot you through the head! You shall find what it is to have *dared* thus to insult a gentleman!"

"Sir," said the landlord, who had overheard, from afar, the noise of this vociferous harangue, and had now opened the door, and peeped in to see what was a-doing, "I must trouble you to be a little quieter, or"—

"I will attend to you directly!" cried the infuriated Portuguese, who had grasped Vial's arm with a force from which that wretched man was unable to break, and was dragging him towards the door.

"What is to be done here!" cried a voice from another head, peeping over the shoulders of the Boniface, of the Star and Garter. Vial began to roar lustily for help, and the crowd thickened. The house-maid descended, broom in hand, from the upper region of cobwebs and lumber; and the cook, who had been cleaning a spit, followed the sounds up stairs, brandishing her weapon as she came.

"Did one ever see such a wild creature!" cried one.

"Let him go—you black Spaniard, you!" vociferated Boots, who was a sturdy John Bull, "or you shall go up before the mayor!"

"He is killing me," bellowed Vial, "help! help!"

They rushed into the room. "Stand off, my good friends!" shouted Castro, whose English always failed him when in a passion, "I want no mischief of any of you!—but this vermin"—(he gave the prostrate man a sound kick) "has insulted a gentleman, and I will make him prove his words. Come along, Sir! you will find who it is you have provoked!"

"Help! help! my good countrymen!—will you stand by, and see a murder committed?"

"Nay—that we will not," cried the Boots, "let him go, and drop that pistol—you yellow nigger, or I'll beat you into mummy," and suiting the action to the word, he grappled with Castro, with such success, (for he was much the stronger man of the two), that Vial disengaged himself, and fled out of the room amid the cries of, "away with you, be off now! There has been noise enough in a decent house to last a twelve-month."

"No. 2 is in a fit, she's so frightened at the row," observed another chambermaid, who had joined the group.

"Come now—*be quiet!*" cried the landlord, "or you shall be taken to the coal-hole!"

"Let me go! let me go!" repeated the other, struggling furiously with his detainer, and at last breaking loose from his gripe, and dashing through the phalanx of servants of both sexes, assembled at the top of the stairs. They were glad to get rid of him. The landlord hated to have anything to do with "justice business." But, if his intention was to pursue Vial, it was vain. For that worthy had made use of his heels and his superior knowledge of the intricacies of our town, and was now no where to be seen; nor, as will be readily believed, did he re-appear, again to urge temptations which had been so ill received.

It was with the following morning's tide, that the Racehorse entered our beautiful river, bearing on board her the two whose coming was expected with such lively interest. Temple and his companion were standing on deck, inspecting the launching of a boat which was to convey them on shore, when, from a distance, another was seen advancing as rapidly as four oars could propel it against the tide. Both watched its coming eagerly,—they were certain that it must contain some one in quest of them. But the lady's was the keener eye of the two, and before Walter could discern the form or features of the solitary man it conveyed, she exclaimed—"Santa Maria! 'tis Paul Castro!" and had fallen, half senseless, into his arms.

\* \* \* \* \*

I leave the interview between the lady and her lover to be imagined by all who have followed me thus far, and become familiar with his unrestrained passions, and deep and (to do him justice) unselfish affection, and with her yielding and passive nature, always at the mercy of the last new comer—yet so sweet, in spite of all its instability and self-engrossedness, as to disarm anger. How the two wept (for we have seen that his was emotion that did not disdain to vent itself in tears,) and how—I must leave to be imagined; and come on shore with the Merchant by Chance, thus happily restored to his own country.

Few were the friends to welcome him; but those few greeted him with all their hearts. Doctor Goedrich and Mr. Arnold, each gave him a hand, as he stepped from the boat, and sundry of his old office mates, whose hearts had been mellowed by the report of his untimely death, till they had ceased to regard his exaltation with envy, were not far behind—each with a kind word, and an honest smile. But the inward elateness of his feelings cannot yet be fully understood, as in answer to "is all well?" he received the gratifying assurance, that his schemes

for the restoration of the concern had been one and all successful, and that there was every prospect that its latter well doing, would exceed even its former money-makings in the good old times.

"And then," continued Arnold, waxing jocose, as he dilated upon what remained to be done, as well as what had been already achieved—"with the assistance of your wife's fortune—don't blush—my dear fellow! though I am glad to see any colour upon your cheek again, after all that you have gone through. And where is she? I am impatient to offer my congratulations. How was it that she did not come on shore with you?"

"Wife!" echoed Temple, as if he had not understood Mr. Arnold's last words, "you are anticipating matters strangely—how do you know that my wife will have a fortune?"

"Will have!—come, Temple, that is a good joke!—*has!*—I expect that you and Mrs. Temple—but what could possess you to leave her on board?"

"Her—on board?" repeated the other, his features crimsoning suddenly, "here is some mistake. It was but this moment that I had Castro with me, roaring like a lion. I judged it best to leave him and the lady to settle matters as well as they could; and now you—what do you mean by all this?"

"Is it not written in your own hand?" cried Arnold anxiously, "do you mean to tell me that you have been making a joke of us all?"

"Written—impossible! though that letter or rather scrawl, was written in such a hurry, in the midst of my preparations for departure, that I hardly knew what I was about!"

"Nay—I have it about me, thanks to my good old habit of never destroying a written document; I can convict you from the work of your own pen. Here—do you not see—*married to Mrs. Levison?*"

Walter gave one look at the letter, and laughed loud and long. Never had he been seen in such high spirits, never so nearly happy and at peace. "What a blunder you have made, thanks to my illegible handwriting!—but I see that I have written *worried to*, instead of *by*. Poor lady, she was in a dreadful irritable state; and was constantly tormenting herself with fear, lest she should arrive in England too late!—If I had any thoughts of marriage in my head, they were—but come away to the office—I have much to hear and to ask."

This almost boyish cheerfulness on the part of one so reserved, if not melancholy, as Temple had been, could not but surprise every one who had known him. It must have arisen from his possessing some inward cause of joy, with which no stran-

ger could intermeddle. He seemed delighted with himself and every one else, and even met Mrs. Lesage's acid face, with a cordial smile. She was exasperated beyond measure at the contradiction which her prophecies, as well as her wishes, were doomed to encounter, and never could satisfy herself with abusing Mr. Arnold's stupidity, and Temple's villanous calligraphy. "If he had been in love," she said, "there would have been some excuse." In short, nothing satisfied her.

Nevertheless that same villanous calligraphy, by giving occasion to a false report, produced consequences most important to two of the personages of my tale—these personages being Mrs. Levison and Castro;—whose good understanding had been restored by five plain words on the part of Sybil, who overflowed with rational gratitude towards Walter (but nothing more)—for the delicate and respectful care he had taken of her, on her home voyage. It had elicited from Vial not only the distinct fact that Colonel Levison was yet alive; but the place where he might be found, and the name which he bore. It seemed as if this miscreant had played his last card in attempting to entangle Castro in his toils, and that he had lost everything, was evident from his sudden and unaccountable disappearance. There was nothing now to prevent Temple and Castro from coming to a complete good understanding, and co-operating in the steps which were to be taken without delay. The former, indeed, showed so much disinterested anxiety and activity, that the nature of the Portuguese must have become as ungenerous as it was proud, if he had retained any longer either suspicion or resentment. In consequence of Vial's communication, the gentlemen set forth for Bath, within two days after Walter's arrival in England.

Their journey, though disagreeable in the extreme to Temple, who stood in need of rest, was by no means a hopeless one. It only remained for him to identify the tempter of his youth with Corby the gamester:—and then to institute proceedings in the courts of law, to liberate Mrs. Levison from his right over her. They augured from Vial's communication, that he was no longer in correspondence with his master; and yet, lest he should repent of the mischief he had done by revealing Colonel Levison's secret, and warn the latter to abscond, they judged it best to lose no time by the way,—and, in spite of the lack of expedition in travelling, as compared with the speed of these days, arrived at Bath early on the second evening after they left our town.

They resolved to lose no time in beginning their researches, and in truth, their inquiries were answered as soon as asked, Corby the gamester being nearly as well known as the Master

of Ceremonies. Though he had not been seen in the streets lately, there was little difficulty in tracing him to his present abode. It seemed, that from the ruined state in which we last saw that wretched man, he had to sink yet lower. He had been a notorious character, in Bath, for many years; for among Colonel Levison's other freaks, it was a favourite pastime of his to sustain more than one character, and by the celerity and secrecy of his movements, to elude suspicion—and being a first-rate adept at play, he had been accustomed to repair to the city of waters for the purpose of replenishing his purse, as well as to indulge in the sport of masquerading. Many a fortune had been tithed by a few evenings' intercourse with Corby;—many a facile young man, irretrievably ruined by his society, as fascinating as it was corrupt. But, since his stolen return from America, when he resolved for the future to lay his old self aside for ever—his luck had begun to fail him, and with his characteristic recklessness he had never made any provision for its decline; perhaps the enormous quantity of spirits which he drank impaired his powers of calculation; or the constant and increasingly large sums which he was compelled to pay Vial, drained his funds, at times when ready money was of consequence; sums, which like most ill-gotten gains, vanished as fast as they were received; for Vial, in his way, had tastes and pursuits, and while his sons and his wife were receiving charity at the hands of Temple and Miss Lesage, he was secretly and madly squandering the money, the possession whereof he durst not own. It was extraordinary, however, that, in no moment of drunken indiscretion, did Colonel Levison ever approach the betrayal of his own secret, thus showing a degree of firmness which many would scarcely deem compatible with eccentricity almost amounting to madness. He had sunk from one stage of debasement and squalidity to another, until some magistrate, out of sheer humanity, had ordered that he should be taken care of in a workhouse, seeing that the end of his life was at hand. To this refuge of the destitute were Temple and Castro directed, and they repaired thither, at an early hour, on the morning after their arrival in Bath.

One of those public establishments, where comfort is pared down to its minimum, never perhaps looking so uninviting as on some laughing sunshiny morning—the time, of all others, when the mind loves to receive images of beauty and freedom. As Walter crossed the wide gravelled court in the front of the building, unadorned by one single flower, and ascended its high, clean, desolate staircase,—it was not in his nature to avoid contrasting the past estate of the man triumphant in the luxury of wickedness with the present wretchedness of the homeless pau-

per, who had hardly been permitted to crawl to his death-bed under the shelter of that cheerless roof, because he belonged to another parish! He could not but feel a certain compassion tempering his repugnance towards the wretched being he was about to visit, as the superintendent, who accompanied them, flung open the door of a small glaring room, without any screen to temper the ferocity of the sunlight, which streamed full upon the straw mattress, where, covered with a coarse rug, was laid the wreck of the gallant and godless Colonel Levison!

"It's of no use," said the man, "he knows nobody; he has lain in this stupid state for many days, and never speaks but to call for drink. The chaplain can make nothing of him."

One glance was sufficient for Walter's individual satisfaction—for the dying man had no longer the power of maintaining his disguise. He was a most ghastly object. The peruke of long white hair, which had given Corby, the gamester, a certain venerable air, of infinite service to him when had to deal with the trustful and inexperienced, had fallen off,—and the entire of his forehead was revealed. His face was livid—its former purple tint having faded into a faint brick red, such as is peculiar to veteran spirit drinkers, and this last fast disappearing before the gathering hues of death; but its expression was not to be mistaken by one, whose nightly misery it had been, for many years, to dream of that countenance under the influence of every possible passion, and in every possible position.

"You may believe what I tell you," observed their conductor, rudely; "he would not know his own child if he stood beside him."

"I must try—though not *quite* so near a relation," replied Walter, with a strong effort, forcing himself to approach the pallet of the dying man. "Witness what I do."—He then stooped his head, and said, in a distinct and impressive tone:—"Colonel Levison do you know me?"

The effect of his words was electric. The patient, who had lain motionless for many days, leaped madly up in the bed, with as unlife-like a movement, as that of a corpse excited to unnatural animation by the spell of the galvanizer,—and raising his long, bare, lean arms—(Walter bade Castro note the left hand)—cried out wildly, in a voice whose tones were assuredly not of earth:

"Know you?—I?—Who calls me by my name to torment me?—I am in Hell already!"

He fell back as suddenly and convulsively as he had sprung up, and never stirred nor spoke again!—

\* \* \* \* \*

And now, who is there that wishes a circumstantial conclu-

sion to the foregoing tale, wherein are comprised the Adventures of the Merchant by Chance?—for to call certain love passages by that name, were to do them wrong—the course thereof ran so insipidly smooth that to mention their termination were to affront any one in possession of the commonest prophetic power. Who would care to be told, in many words, of the fortune he amassed—of the house he buildd? It only remains then for me to transcribe the preamble of his last will and testament, and thereby to answer a question which may have occurred to some,—Who was Temple? The document commenced in these words :

*For the satisfaction of my CHILDREN (the word had been subsequently replaced by heirs at law) and for the encouragement of all those who may seek to do right for its own sake, I, Walter Temple, being of sound mind and in good health, in this year of our Lord 180—, do, previous to entering upon the disposition of my property, state the following facts.*

*I am the son of that John Stephens who was executed, in the year —, for forging a Bank bill of £5000 upon — and — London Bankers. I was brought up under no good examples, and, at my father's death, fell into the hands of one whose active wickedness, I hope, is a rare thing upon Earth. But a circumstance which brought me near to Death's door, gave me time and cause for reflection : and I resolved, from that moment, to lead an active and virtuous life. My resolution has been strictly fulfilled in the matter of activity ; of the virtue I must render an account at another tribunal. I married an affectionate and prudent woman, who is now at rest. On my wedding day, I replaced the sum of money feloniously abstracted. I commit these things to writing, not from any idle vain glory in my own doings, or to cast any reproach upon those who are gone ; but that those who come after me may be reminded, that it is better to make a name than inherit one, and that what man hath done, man may do.*

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## THE STREETS, No. V.

### NIGHT IN THE STREETS.—SNOW.

One of my conditions of acquaintance with the Streets was if I mistake not, that you were to walk by night as well as by day, in winter no less than in summer. To me, after the heat and noise of a crowded room, the freshness of the open air is an

unspeakable relief, and its influence, together with that of exercise, most efficacious in restoring the mind to its wonted tone of composure. I have stood up for the existence of beauty in the bird's eye view of a town, by daylight. I claim for it greater praise in its details of the Streets at night. The long lines of lamps, in their diminishing perspective, are most grateful to the eye; and, seen by their flattering and partial light, the most deformed mass of brick and mortar acquires grandeur and stateliness. How glorious then is the effect, should our way chance to lead us past some fine specimen of architecture, and should there chance to shine a moon. I shall never forget the beautiful appearance of the Bank of Ireland, beheld under such favourable circumstances;—the deep shadows cast by the projecting wings of the building; the mellow twilight which mantled the sweep of its semicircular colonnades; the mystery thrown over all that one would conceal, and the spirituality (forgive the word, if it soar a thought too high) and softness imparted to all the portions exposed to view. Yes,—merely as a sight for the eye, if the mind never allowed itself to speculate upon the weal or woe of the human beings who are folded within its walls,—the night view of a town is impressive—under some circumstances, it may be sublime.

Night in the Streets! what a thousand whimsical and grotesque pictures of years gone by are conjured up by the mere writing of these words! what days of school-boy mischief! what audacious pranks, our delight in which was so vociferous as to endanger the concealment necessary to their prosperity! what wars waged against watchmen of the *ancien régime*! what annoyances directed against the houses of those suspected of being miserly and ill-tempered! what escapades, what frolics long buried in oblivion are now remembered, till we grow as mirthful as, awhile since, we were disposed to be poetical; the prudence of our mature years is, for the moment, forgotten; and we could rush out, as of old, and pursue our enemy snow-ball in hand, ready to fight or to fly as occasion should require. We could lend ourselves to the achievement of twisting off a certain obnoxious knocker, which we pass every day, and which glares upon us with frightful eyes and a grinning mouth, so savagely, that we are reminded of the student Anselmus' tormentor—the witch who stationed herself, in that form, before the Archivarius Lindhurst's door, to forbid his entrance, as told in one of Hoffmann's crazy tales, so inimitably translated by that talented and large-minded critic, Mr. Carlyle.

But to return. How striking is the appearance of a long line of streets on some snowy night, when the pavement is all clean,



and the midway frozen so hard, that every flake lies where it falls. Of all the children of the elements, Snow is surely the most graceful—the most gentle—the most courtly. Wind—beats him in variety—he is up to any music, from a lullaby to a grand chorus! One night, he will moan like any delicate and tender-hearted lover—on the next, he will roar as if he had an army at his back, and wanted only the least in the world more of provocation, to crush your house down to the ground, with one of his gigantic gusts—and, even in his better humours, when he is neither melancholy nor mad, the audacity of his conduct is proverbial: think of the ships that he has wrecked—the venerable fruit and forest trees which he has blown down—the corn he has prostrated—the houses he has unroofed!—Rain—why, for rain there is not one simple good word to be said, save by discontented farmers; or on some very dusty day—and then, one *may* compound for a thunder shower, but nothing more, and that, half for the sake of the spectacle. Hail,—cleaner than rain, but shrewd and biting past all endurance. Thunder and lightning, too startling for people of sensibility,—no one likes to be come over on a sudden, with a loud lumbering peal, and a fierce flash of fire, which, for aught you know, may carry away the use of eyes, ears and hands. Frost, is so cold and stern! the miser of the elements, who locks up everything beautiful and given to motion with his key of adamant, and would fain starve you into the uncomfortable belief that flowers are dead for ever, and that brooks will run no more: albeit, it must be said of Frost, that, like other misers, he can sometimes do magnificent things, and treat you to such a raree show, as there is nothing else in nature to compare with—changing scrubby sere trees into enchanted pillars of diamonds, and making hedges of dry sticks outvie the far-famed grotto of Antiparos. Thaw, is quite too dirty for decent company, but Snow (by the way, his only failing is a propensity to appear at the same time with that most slovenly personage) Snow is a gentleman born; his easy, exquisite descent shames the best executed flights of the peerless Taglioni herself, and then he is as quiet as he is elegant; as pure, until the earth hath soiled him, as if he were a creature formed of the down dropped from angels' wings. How beautifully, in the space of one short hour, has he strewn the vista before us—canopying the houses as with a silver mantle, and spreading beneath our feet a carpet so delicate, that it almost goes against our consciences to tread upon it. No wonder that West Indian born children are so delighted with his first appearance;—no wonder that they love to find the print of animals' feet under their window when they rise in the

morning, or to trace across the whitened fields the foot-marks of the woodman or shepherd—as we do those of the solitary pedestrian before us.

We have overtaken this tall figure of a man, heavily cloaked, with a fur cupola upon his head, and above that, an ample umbrella—a man, to be sure, from Kamschatka, to judge from the sooty superfluity of his whiskers and hair. Would that he were in Kamschatka, or anywhere save in our good town! He is one of those suspicious characters, whose occupation is at night, the last relic of the days of gentle highwaymen. You may at once recognise him and his comrades, should you meet them in the day-time, by their coarse blue surtouts and pantaloons, their black stocks, with no linen above, and an equal quantity below, the spurred boots, the huge ungloved hands, and a nameless strut, as different from the genuine military step, as a magpie's is from a bantam's. They have, all four of them, taken up their abode in the house of a respectable widow woman, whom they have inspired with so much awe, that she would give half a year's rent to get them out of her house, though she dare not hint such a thing, for as much as her plate is worth. They lounge about all day, and drink, and play at cards, and sleep, and all night are astir, and often come in to change their dresses, and then go out again. But they pay their bills every week, and are very civil to Mrs. Whitesmith, so that she does not know what to do. That worthy looked at us, as we passed, and had we been alone, might have offered us his company, as it is—hark!—a whistle!—he is joined by one of his comrades—they turn down the narrow street, and are out of sight in a moment. We may walk homeward unmolested, and as we go, remember a thousand strange stories of town robberies;—amongst others, of the incorporated body of thieves, who, some years ago, took a house in one of our principal streets, and were wont to set forth on their nightly expeditions in a hackney coach: and how they stopped an excellent Quaker lady, travelling peacefully homeward in her carriage: lifted her from it,—relieved her of her purse, watch and reticule—saluted her, handed her into her chaise again,—bade her good night, and the coachman to drive on,—how. . . but perhaps the rogues may at some future period be honoured with a chapter (I had well nigh written a *gallows*) to themselves.

It was “on such a night as this,” that that great calamity befell an elderly virgin of my acquaintance, to allude to which, was tantamount to losing her friendship. Poor Miss Matilda Vere! she was one of those excellent ladies of the old school, of whom so few are to be found in our large, bustling modernised towns: one who loved early hours, and shot saracenets with

tight sleeves, and rejoiced in scanty black lace cloaks,—one who took pleasure in playing a pool,—was greatly afraid of wheeled carriages,—went to morning prayers on week days,—wrought pictures in tent stitch,—kept two dogs and a parrot dumb from extreme old age,—whose reading was of the days of Mount Henneth and the Castle of Hardayne, (that the glory of such books should *ever* go by!)—who objected to Miss Porter's novels because they were too dry and historical,—and who died of the introduction of French wines and quadrilles :—in short, as cross, charitable, conversible, and hospitable an old lady, as you could wish to find residing in a retired square, opposite to a church, in a house up a great flight of steps, with cherubim cut in stone over the door, and chintz window curtains which had been in use, ever since the rebellion of forty-five.

On such a night as this, in the days when coaches were few and cars not any, she was wending her way homewards, preceded by her "little maid some four feet high," bearing a lantern. The good lady was ruminating, as she walked along, upon her losses at cards, or on some choice piece of news,— "she never talked scandal, not she!"—which she had heard that evening; and the Abigail, with her garments kilted up high, trudged on, holding the light warily, and never looking round, till she had reached their own home. She ran up the high steps, gave a discreet knock, and then turned—Miss Vere was not there! For a moment she stood aghast,—such a figure as Hood would have loved to sketch!—She was positive, that they had set out together from Miss Dropwood's—then she began to consider that her mistress, seeing how bad the night was, must have become afraid, and returned to sleep at her friend's house—she had done so once before: and contented (we confess, somewhat easily) with this solution of her perplexities, she made fast doors and windows and went to bed. Alas! for poor Miss Matilda Vere! she was at that moment standing alone and amazed, in a coal vault into which she had slipped! The lid thereof had been imperfectly fastened, and had given way beneath her heavy tread (she was one of the most ponderous of spinsters). Great was her surprise—great her discomfiture—loud her calls for help—but the watchman, who was subject to the earache, was plodding along on the opposite side of the street, with his head comfortably wrapped in a Welsh wig, and few passengers were likely to be abroad on such a bad night. Then she began to tease herself with fears lest the same disaster should befall a second pedestrian, "and you know," remarked she, "no one knows what disagreeable people might have come upon one's head." Then she began to wonder if Kitty discovering her loss, would come

and seek for her; until at last, amid her perplexities, and perhaps under the influence of the stirrup cup of mulled elder-flower wine of which she had partaken, she fairly fell asleep, in a standing posture. How she awoke, by whom or when she was extricated from her inglorious confinement, were matters upon which she would never condescend—no, not to the friend of her bosom: and those who knew her valued her regard too highly, to risk the loss of it by their rash inquisitiveness.

How delightful is such a still white Christmas night as this, supposing the snow be all fallen, and the sky bright with its countless stars! There *were* such things as carols once; and it was a pleasant thing to watch the bands of little children creeping from door to door, with their ancient ditties, and their voices innocent and tuneless. There *were* such things as evergreen bushes wherewith houses were decked; and it brought a cheerful anticipation of the morrow's gaiety to overtake on Christmas eve, some hale man, bending under a holly bough, enriched with artificial flowers. Formerly too, (but the custom has been discontinued for many years) the choirs of some of our churches paraded some of our principal streets, stopping occasionally and singing hymns and rejoicing anthems suited to the season. I have lain betwixt sleep and waking, and listened to the harmony of their voices, till I have been ready to dream over the old scene of the Nativity as it is set forth in some monkish painting, with the Virgin and the wise men of the East, and the herald star shining upon, and receiving fresh glory from the manger where the holy babe was cradled. O let no one say that the ideal world is closed to the dwellers in a town, let no one excuse his own worldliness and wilfulness, by unjustly alleging that there is nothing in the city which can compensate for the absence of natural objects, for the lack of repose which belongs to rural life. From the most familiar and commonplace things of every day life, the contemplation may set forth and wander along a thousand different paths of beauty, and forget the world of care and money as completely as if he sat musing in an elm tree instead of an attic, and hearing the whistle of wood birds, instead of the church clocks chiming the midnight hour.

## THE STORY OF MADAME FABBRONI.

"I could perceive, though Hannah bore full well  
 The ills of life, that few with her would dwell,  
 But pass away, like shadows o'er the plain  
 From flying clouds, and leave it fair again."

*Tales of the Hall. Crabbe.*

THOSE who love a concert will understand the pleasure with which some years ago, on emerging from my invalid's room, I encountered this tempting announcement, ostentatiously paraded on every wall, in the midst of the usual mosaic of advertisements of cheap shops, sales by auction, &c. &c.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CHARITIES.

MUSIC HALL.

UNPRECEDENTED ATTRACTION,

MADAME FABBRONI'S LAST APPEARANCE

IN PUBLIC.

Madame Fabbroni, with the fame of whose talents as an artist the musical circles had long been ringing, "whose performance," it was distinctly stated in several newspapers, "a certain illustrious personage, whose taste in music was as fine as it was fastidious, had decidedly preferred to that of any other *Cantatrice* of the day;" Madame Fabbroni!—as famous for her unimpeachable conduct as for her superior beauty—with whose fascinations every caller had been tantalizing me, for the last fortnight, with "what a pity you are laid up! you never heard anything like her!" I do not know when I have been so much delighted, when my expectations have been raised to so high a point; and, certainly, I am sure that they were never more entirely fulfilled than on that Tuesday evening—an evening to be marked with a white stone in the calendar of my musical experiences.

The concert room was crowded to an excess, by an audience composed, as the chronicles of the day set forth, "of the *élite*

of the nobility and gentry of our town and its vicinity." What a pretty show is a public room when completely filled with a gay good-humoured company; what droll bouquets of characteristic heads does it present for the amusement of the physiognomist! what infinitely varied studies of conceit, of confidence, of awkward bashfulness, of fullblown enthusiasm, of indifference assumed because it is *genteel*! How different from a similar scene in the metropolis, and not the less entertaining for its want of style and the absence of aristocracy. There sat a group of girls, who had been laying by sixpences for the last three months to enjoy one treat altogether; the eager brightness of their eyes, and the incessant flow of their sympathetic talk, being so many tokens that they were partaking of its delights, with a keenness of appetite only to be purchased by rare acquaintance with pleasure. Close behind them was a belle, who had been with difficulty persuaded to show herself on this occasion, who could not enjoy a provincial spectacle, or anything, indeed, after the Grand Opera at Paris! and pulled her bouquet to pieces for lack of better entertainment, *not* aware, of course, that every motion of her delicate hands was watched with avidity by a trio of gentlemen, who had avowedly taken up their position opposite to the end of the bench on which she was seated. Not far off, were two of the race of elderly musicals, who could avowedly remember the days when Mara and Banti made their first appearance, and while they would not allow that the art had been other than retrograding since the days of Handel, were, nevertheless, unable to keep at home whenever anything was to be heard. There was—but I forget myself—there came at last, after all my waiting, heralded by applause loud enough to raise the roof, and repeated again and again—there came at last the delight of every eye and ear in that large assembly—the far-famed Madame Fabbroni.

Dressed in a simple robe of black satin, and a small lace cap which clouded but did not conceal her rich hair;—she advanced to the front of the orchestra so quietly, with such an entire absence of pretension, that it was difficult to believe that this was the *artiste* so much flattered and courted by the great,—whose dress had served for a model to the fashionable, and whose acquaintance in private had been thought desirable by so many, "who made it a rule to have nothing to do with professional people." She appeared to be scarcely thirty years old—so round was her cheek, and so smooth her complexion; but she confessed herself to be ten years older. This was pronounced by some, whose faces had outrun time, to be merely "a piece of affectation." She had made the avowal, however, and none could question it. Her voice, too, was in full perfection—

sweet and touching rather than powerful, and so clear that it seemed to penetrate every fibre of your frame with its silver sound. But the charm of Madame Fabbroni's singing did not lie in her voice, it was in her expression, in the exquisite manner in which she rendered her music, with such force and feeling as no heart could withstand. She was not one whose talent made you stare,—but you loved her for it—you longed to make a friend of her—your tears answered its call; she could express inward fear, quiet pride, intense and passionate regret, with a truth and energy which I have never heard reached by any other singer. The music which, on that occasion, I heard her sing (I have often heard her in private since) was Zingarelli's "Ombra adorata," Handel's "Ye sacred Priests," a grand air by Pucitta or Guglielmi, or some other *ari* or *ino* of the *couleur de rose* school of composers,—the "Deh'parlate," of Cimarosa, (a song for immortality,) and the duet, "Crudel perchè," from Mozart's Figaro, in which she so entirely *sung down* the poor little man who was *Il Conte* for that occasion, that he looked nearly ready to cry when an *encore* was demanded, well knowing how small a portion of the applause fell to his share.

Whilst she sung, the hush of the audience, provincial and most unmusical as it was, was positively breathless—the applause deafening when she ceased;—then began the clatter of tongues, delighted to be set at liberty to express their owners' sentiments, in such snatches of talk as these:

"O, Miss Johnson!"

"Charming, Lydia! charming indeed! look at Mr. Wilmot, yonder! why even *he* looks pleased, and you know he's generally too grand to admire anything."

"And Major Rock, too, Jane!—there by the lady with the Paradise plume; I am sure he must have worn a hole in his gloves with his ecstasy. There's Mr. Brandram—don't move—I won't."

"Sister," said the youngest of the economical coterie, in a loud whisper, "does she make all the songs herself?"

"Hush, Anne! you talk so loud! people will find out that you have never been to a concert before."

"Well, ladies," said an assumed, middle-aged, bilious-looking man, remarkably neatly dressed, who lounged up to another group, "have you been pleased with *the* Fabbroni to-night?"

"O Mr. Exeter! pleased!—enchanted! such a dear creature!"

"Well, she *is* good, I must allow," replied the would-be-critic, with an air of the most ineffable pomposity; but I cannot forget Billington,—and then to compare her feeling with Grassini's!"

"Now, Mr. Exeter," cried a lively girl, some fifteen years old, or thereabouts, who not having *come out*, was privileged to say whatever she pleased, "you know you never admire anything nor any body,—so if you please, you shall say no more."

"Fie! Jane, you are incorrigible! But tell me, Mr. Exeter, is it true about the gentleman who accompanies her!"

"What true?—I flatter myself that I am tolerably well acquainted with her history."

"Are they privately married, or not?"

"Why, really," replied the oracle, "it is a disputed point; in town, I know, it was said——" but, at that instant, I extricated myself from the press, and lost the last words of the scandal-monger.

I was swept into the saloon with the crowd of persons, eager, like myself, to obtain a near view of this celebrated syren. Her appearance suffered astonishingly little on a closer approach; she was certainly one of the loveliest women I ever saw; as she stood the unconscious centre of an admiring circle, talking, with the most affectionate simplicity of manner, to an old gentleman with a white head, and occasionally appealing to the younger one, on whose arm she was leaning, and whom I at once guessed to be the person mentioned by the parties in the room. But one glance at the pair made me laugh at the folly of supposing them to be married. I said to myself: "This must be her brother;"—but I saw them exchange a look, and I hazarded a bolder conjecture: "her son?" though he looked as singularly old for his years, as she appeared youthful for hers. He was a plain likeness of Madame Fabbroni; his hair was already beginning to turn grey, and his complexion was as pale and dingy as undyed wool; but he was still very like his mother. It was from his figure that I judged him to be younger than his face seemed to show;—it was tall, ill-knit and bending—the figure of one who has outgrown his strength, I was standing, in a corner, noting, with much interest, the play of the lady's countenance, when a voice, close to my ear, said:

"You did not know that she was a towns-woman of yours?"

"I!—bless me, Mr. Lee!—no, indeed, I did not?"

"Yes, Sir," replied the first speaker, "do you not see that her name is Smith Italianized, with merely the terminal *ni* added. You must remember her husband, Oyster Smith as he used to be called."

"What, the fellow who failed?"

"The same, Sir, and ran away some fifteen years ago, before I came to live here."

"I remember—and this is his daughter?"



"His daughter! pooh! you are blind! no, but that is his son, and that lady is his widow."

"Lord bless me! you don't say so!—is that pretty Harriet Robinson, as she used to be called? Gad, I recollect her now—the sweetest pair of eyes she had, in all —shire!"

"A townswoman!" said I to myself, "why then I am sure that there must be a history worth knowing," and in the true spirit of curiosity which ought to animate every one who writes himself tale-teller, I set myself to work to discover whether there were any "pitiful story" appertaining to this metamorphosis of a merchant's wife into a first-rate concert singer. I need not recount all the ins and outs, the cross-questionings, and the gleanings of reminiscences, by which I obtained, at last, a complete knowledge of the principal facts of her life:—a writer of stories has master-keys which will open every lock. I have digested my materials, and thrown them into the form of the following sketch, to show "how divine" a thing a woman may be made.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was a wet afternoon in the miserable month of November, and if, on the outside of a small lodging house, in one of our dingiest looking streets, everything looked desolate and cheerless,—within the same, the aspect of things was still less inviting. The room in which my story begins, was a small parlour on the ground floor, crowded with old-fashioned furniture—the chimney smoked, as was evident from the state of the ceiling, and the fire had been recently mended with a shovel-full of wet cinders:—the window had not been cleaned for many a long day—the soiled chintz window curtains, overdone with dusty fringe, were dropping to pieces from age and neglect,—and a large cupboard, containing the entire possessions of the family who had been compelled to take refuge in such a dismal abode, stood open, disclosing its heterogeneous contents. In the midst of all this discomfort, upon a settee, whose cover had been coarsely patched until it resembled Theseus' boat, sat a widow lady between her two daughters. The conversation had most probably turned upon the recent loss they had sustained, for many tears were shed;—the elder daughter was seen to weep profusely:—the younger, a beautiful girl, scarcely eighteen, seemed to strive with her sorrow—for again and again she buried her forehead in her two small clasped hands:—and, after a short pause, would break forth anew into a paroxysm of violent anguish, which was redoubled, as often as she cast her eyes upon a letter which lay open upon the stained and ricketty table.

"Indeed, indeed, Harriet," said her mother, at last breaking silence, "I cannot bear this. You will make yourself ill, if

you indulge in such immoderate grief; and I only spoke, you know, my love!—I urged you to consult your own judgment. Come, dry your eyes—Susan shall answer this letter, and you shall hear no more of it.”

Harriet dried her eyes and looked up.

“But, mother,” said Susanna, also ceasing to weep, “what are you to do?”

This was not to be answered. Mrs. Robinson’s body and mind had both of them suffered from a paralytic stroke, and the constant attendance of one of her daughters was imperatively necessary:—and how was the other, an inexperienced girl, expensively, but uselessly educated, to provide the comforts which her enfeebled state required.—She began to weep like a child.

“If Harriet,” resumed Susanna, “had any other attachment—”

“No, no,” cried her sister vehemently, “Cruel! unkind that you are! It is not that, it is not indeed, mother!”

“If not then,” continued the other, “do you consider what you are doing in refusing even to think of this proposal?”

“I know—I know it all, and any body but that man —— To come upon us, with such an offer, at such a time as this, is it not enough, Susan?—”

The mother turned wistfully from one daughter to the other, as they spoke alternately.

“Enough,” replied the elder, “to show that there is *one* at least on whom our altered circumstances have produced no change towards us.”

Harriet laughed bitterly. “And can you deceive yourself so far, as to imagine that this proposal of his, is the result of generosity? No—no—shake your head as you will, you knew better, as well as I! He has asked me to become his wife, at this miserable juncture, because he fancies himself sure of his victim!”

“And his victim,” cried Mrs. Robinson, “you shall not be! Compose yourself, my love, you shall be pressed on this subject no more.”

Susanna arose from her seat, and making a show of controlling her impatience, walked to the window, with an air which was intended to convey severe displeasure against her sister’s weakness.

“Susanna! you shall answer Mr. Smith’s letter. We cannot, in honour, defer it any longer.”

“O no!—no!” cried Harriet, kissing her mother, as she disengaged herself from her embrace, and stood upright before her. “I will not do what is so wrong!—You have seen my

last grief, Susan ;—my last weakness—for I know it is a weakness ! How many a girl would be thankful to see the path of her duty so clearly pointed out to her ! I will follow it ! You shall hear no more complaint ; I hope that I have strength to do what is right."

She made her way out of the room as she spoke, leaving her mother and sister in admiration at her sudden change of mood. She hastened up stairs to her wretched little chamber, and falling upon her knees before a trunk, drew from its concealment behind the mouldering lining, a small picture. She did not allow herself one instant's time to peruse the lineaments of the face, which it had been her secret delight to pourtray from memory—and retouch—and return to again and again :—but, having torn the card on which it was drawn, into a hundred pieces, she opened the window, and watched them whirled away into the gloom, by the sobbing wind. It was over—the idol was destroyed ; she pressed her hands upon her heart, as if to keep down its beatings ; and prayed, with importunate energy, for support under the trials she was about voluntarily to enter into. Six weeks after that day, she married Mr. Smith, reputed at that time to be one of the richest men resident in our town, and without question one of the most ungainly.

The above scene may be taken as no bad specimen of Harriet Robinson's character. She was passionate, vivacious, imaginative, and yet able, in any emergency, to act with a degree of decision almost masculine ! Susanna had wasted much blame upon her, for being "always in extremes." In the hey-day of her deceased father's prosperity, no one had ever enjoyed the luxuries of life with a keener relish than herself. Every mouth was full of her lively sayings ; every scandal-monger had borne bitter testimony to her gaiety. In short, she was loved and envied after the usual fashion of rich beauties. A circumstance, however, must be told, which had happened, scarcely a year before the downfall of her brilliant expectations, which gave a colour to much of her future life.

Harry Stukeley, the only son and heir of a Baronet in one of the southern counties—at that time, travelling upon the continent,—was as fine a young man, as old songs say, "as you would wish to see, all on a summer's day,"—brave, enterprising, and affectionate ; and if somewhat fickle,—why the best of us all have our faults. During a college vacation he had run down to our town to see its wonders, bringing letters of introduction to Mr. Robinson ; and gave an early proof of his activity, by insisting upon riding a spirited blood horse when he accompanied the ladies on some excursion or other—and of his ill-luck, by being thrown from the same, and breaking a

limb. The consequences were, a long confinement in the merchant's house; but he protested, that a prison would be a paradise if he were waited upon there, by two such charming nurses as Harriet and Susanna. Alas! the former, who was by much the most assiduous in administering to his comforts, appropriated the praise to herself more readily than a damsel a few years older would have thought prudent. He was young, elegant, well-born;—she, a lovely, enthusiastic girl, whose thoughts and actions were regulated by the boldness of inexperienced innocence, and who was captivated by the fascinating stranger, almost before she knew that she had a heart to give away. They read together—they sung together;—she found him, one day, busily engaged in sketching her as she was sitting with her embroidery frame before her. On the next she returned the compliment. Her mother was of that placid and unobservant nature which never sees anything;—her father, engrossed by the anxiety as to his involved affairs, which shortened his life,—and Susanna, was she blinded by similar fancies, that she saw nothing? It might be so,—but ere Harry's convalescence was confirmed, there came from Sir Giffard Stukeley a polite acknowledgment of their kindness,—and a summons for his son to join him abroad with as little delay as possible. He was on the point of marrying a noble Italian lady, and wished his son to be present at the nuptials. It was a sore trouble to Harry to leave those affectionate girls: but he had scarcely set foot on the continent, ere some new fascinations of bright eyes and black hair, some air on the guitar, or some moon-lit ramble through a vineyard, eradicated the remembrance of both, for the time being. It was not so with those left behind;—Harriet thought it no shame to weep upon his shoulder when they parted, and busied himself in drawing a spirited likeness of the departed one, after the sketch she had taken. She never asked herself the question whether he loved her,—she was sure that she loved him, by the tokens of silence as to his name, of dreaming of no one else,—of being irritated ten times a-day at least, by Susanna's cool commendations of the merits of his mind as well as of his person, and the indiscreet inquiries of heartless callers, who never forgot to ask “whether Mr. Stukeley had yet written, and they so kind to him!”—Before her day-dreams were utterly dispelled by his long silence, after the one hasty note he addressed to *both* of them, just before he sailed for Ostend,—came the sudden and double calamity of loss of parent, as well as of fortune:—and, at that precise juncture an old acquaintance of Mr. Robinson's stepped forward, and offered protection and assistance after the fashion of Auld Robin Gray. She did, then, indeed wonder why Harry had

ceased to write, but she checked so unprofitable a spirit of speculation, and as we have seen, consented to this odious match, to save her mother from the cares and privations of poverty.

But to marry a man who was her antipathy—Gentle lady, did you ever, for one instant, entertain a similar idea?—O then, and then only can you picture to yourself the sickness, the soreness of heart, with which Harriet contemplated the sacrifice she was about to make; her personal dislike so little short of aversion, to the sound of his step, to his scraping dry voice, which she was compelled to master. He was fifty years of age, at least; a little lame, and wore a bag-wig—never was such a hideous bag-wig seen before! Yet he had none of that quiescence in his composition, which is suitable to mature years; he rocked upon his chair as he sat, he shuffled with his feet all the time he was talking—he told good stories without any discernible point in them, and was fond of the pleasures of the table enjoyed alone; for he was intolerant and suspicious of any society, especially of the young and the lively. His eyes were of a weak milky gray colour, his mouth opened and shut with a jerk, and when open, his under lip hung as if its main spring was broken. He wore full suits of a snuffy brown cloth (never of any other colour)—a hat, with perfectly straight brims—leggings—and shoes that creaked:—Poor Harriet, to be compelled to marry such an unlovely man, and she only seventeen! Then how every body talked the matter over! some crying shame upon Mrs. Robinson, some saying that it was the girl's own fault, for that she had been offered the situation of teacher in Mrs. O'Dottrell's school—some went further,—but there was no end to their scandal; she was married to Mr. Smith, and that was all that could be made of it.

There are minds which never move steadily, till some burden is laid upon them, the weight of which would grind a weaker vessel to dust. What if we say that there is a peculiar elasticity and energy of spirit, mercifully apportioned to those whose lot is cast on the rough ways of life?—At all events, this was Harriet's case:—her temperament was of that gay and unapprehensive nature, which enables its possessor to cast off his cares as soon as their object is out of sight. This alone made tolerable the daily trial of her husband's peculiarities, which were unrelieved by any tenderness, or any of those transient fits of generosity, so touching in the uncouth—and when he was gone, she could forget his curiosity, and his continuous and sapless talk, and his particular smile (that smile was the worst of all!) and amuse herself among her books, or with her music; or run two streets' length, and gather strength and spirit from the comfort of observing how contented her mother

looked in the small house, wherein she was installed by Mr. Smith, according to the terms of the *bargain*. For occupation, she began sedulously to cultivate one of the most delicious voices which was ever bestowed upon mortal by the fairy of sweet song; though her husband saw "no good in it," and would fall to sleep in the midst of her sweetest air. He was an odd compound of a man: so keen a speculator in his counting-house, and so dull a companion at home—a man who lived upon his business reputation, and was proud of his wife, as others have been of a picture or a statue purchased at an immense price (he took good care that the world should know *how* dearly) to adorn his house withal—proud of her too, as of the mother to his heir,—for, within eighteen months after their marriage, she presented him with a son—their only child.

Here was another source of delight, mercifully opened to Harriet. Susanna and she had little in common. Her mother was rapidly declining, and ever since she was married, had shrunk from any confidential intercourse, as if afraid of hearing the particulars of the price, at which the comfort of her latter years had been purchased; her husband was never much more than civil to her; but her baby was surely sent from Heaven for her relief, that she might have some living creature all her own, upon whom she might pour out her whole heart's affections. Her recovery after her confinement was long and dubious, she was brought within a near view of the grave, and compelled perforce, seriously to weigh the comparative values of the world that is, and the world that is to come. She arose from her sick bed a wiser woman than she had lain down; but still merry as well as wise, and not a few scornful people would say—"I am ashamed of *that* Mrs. Smith! so giddy as she is!—and her husband hardly caring a straw for her!" Poor Harriet!—she little knew how hard a trial was in store for her!

On the first mild day after her medical attendant had pronounced it to be safe for her to go abroad—she paid a visit to her mother who had been confined to the house by a slight cold, for a week. She found Mrs. Robinson alone, and was beginning artlessly to disburden her mind of the joy she felt in being released from her captivity,—and to talk, with a young mother's rapture, of her infant boy—when Mrs. Robinson, with some mystery, and a certain flutter of manner, put a letter into her hand and desired her to read it. Its contents ran thus:

"Madam,

"My absence on the continent, which has been much longer than I originally intended, has alone prevented me from sooner expressing my sympathy for your loss in the decease of my late

lamented correspondent—particularly, as we are grieved to hear that he did not leave you in such easy circumstances as your merits deserve. I will, however, lose no further time in asking a favour of you, which may show how anxious I am that the intercourse between your family and mine should be maintained on its former footing. My two little girls, by my first Lady Stukeley, have arrived at that age when they will need the good offices of an instructress. Will your daughter (permit me, by the way, to offer you my best congratulations on the happy marriage of your *second* daughter—my son's great friend)—will your daughter, I say, oblige Lady Stukeley and myself by undertaking the charge of them?—My son, Harry Stukeley, who is, at present, travelling through Wales with a friend, will, in the case of Miss Robinson's compliance with our request, offer her a safe and thoughtful escort to the scene of her duty, and I hope, her pleasure also. We shall receive her as one of the family—and I must beg to leave the adjustment of all pecuniary matters in your hands, and to remain, dear Madam,

“Your sincere friend,

“GIFFARD STUKELEY.”

“Is it not a kind letter?” said Mrs. Robinson, “how pleasantly he mentions you!”

“Kind? mother—I beg your pardon for my absence—Susanna has answered it, of course.”

“Yes—my love! and I expect that Mr. Harry Stukeley and his friend will be here towards the close of the week. I shall be glad to see the young man again, though I do not know how I shall be able to prevail upon myself to part with Susan. Poor child! how warm you look!—would you not like to have the window opened?”

“Surely—mother,” faltered Harriet, mistrusting what she heard, “Susanna cannot, for an instant, think—”

“It is a great sacrifice, I know, love,—but you set her the example!”

Harriet could not bear this,—she turned to the window to shed unperceived the tears extorted from her by Mrs. Robinson's talk. “Sacrifice!” thought she within herself, “does she think it a sacrifice to go and live under the same roof with ———. It is a sacrifice, dear mother, which your circumstances no longer require,” added she with a sigh.

“I told her so, my love,—but she seemed to think it right at once—and what could I say?—and I shall have you still, you know, love; and that is everything to me!” Poor Mrs. Robinson said, and *thought* the same of whichever of her daughters chanced to be her companion for the time being.

"And so Susanna is actually going to Stukeley Priory? Happy, happy girl!—She might, however, have mentioned her plan to me, before she made up her mind."

"Why, Harriet, that is not being as kind as usual, and she going to leave us,—and for a governess' place! I know what it is to be a governess. My friend Miss Lamb was one, and was expected always to sit at the side-table when there was company, and never to speak until she was spoken to."

Mrs. Robinson's reminiscence was lost upon Harriet, as she sat, with the letter in her hand,—her thoughts rapidly embracing present, past, and future chances. "Here towards the end of the week!" said she to herself,—“is there no escape?—No hope of avoiding seeing him?—but why should I? He will find no difficulty in meeting *me*—and after all, I almost think that I should like to shake hands with him once again."

She took her leave, and went home to meditate upon the tidings which she had been told. The more she thought upon the matter, the more she was disturbed. It was not in nature to avoid comparing her own situation with such a one as her fancy painted her sister's might be. Some would think that the wife of a man, reputed to be worth an hundred and fifty thousand pounds, must be utterly mad to envy any one in the situation of a governess. But it was so, nevertheless; and she went to her pillow that night more dissatisfied than she had ever hitherto known herself, with the unequal way in which good and evil fortune seem to be distributed amongst the children of men.

Better thoughts, however, came with the morning. She forgot to imagine that her distasteful husband's kindness was doled out more parsimoniously than it had been at first;—a thought, which of late had crossed her mind not unfrequently. She forbore most heroically from thinking over the tempting chapter of events which *might* have happened. But her composure was severely shaken before the close of the day:—for, while they were sitting at dinner, her husband addressed her with, "I say, Harriet, your mother tells me that she is expecting *that* Mr. Stukeley at the end of the week, who is going to take Susanna off our hands;—and so, it is just as well to show him some civility. They will all dine here on Sunday." She had wounded herself slightly with her knife, and was therefore in no haste to reply. What was she to do?—she had resolved, if possible, to avoid meeting Stukeley—to be *not at home* when he called upon her, and she was now compelled, as it were, to build up a fresh wall against the incursion of the enemy. She has since said, that never was time so insupportably tedious as



the days which intervened between Mr. Smith's communication and the Sunday.

The day came at last. Harriet had remained away from the church in consequence of a headache. Susanna had been with her on the Saturday, selfishly full of her own prospects—Stukeley Priory was situated in the finest part of Hampshire—she was to be treated just as if she were one of the family—to visit with them—and the neighbourhood, Mr. Harry said, was genteel and sociable. Harriet was much hurt by the total want of feeling she displayed—the apathetic willingness she showed to abandon her mother,—nor was she, for a moment, imposed upon by any of her sister's high-sounding professions of being actuated by a sense of duty, in making a sacrifice for the sake of her own independence. She had, however, the more than justice to imagine herself in her sister's place, and built so many air-castles, and such high ones, that she paid for this dangerous indulgence with a sleepless night, and a nervous morning. Four o'clock came.—Never was Harriet longer over her toilette,—and yet, its result was, her appearing in the drawing-room, dressed in her most matronly gown, and having put on a cap, on the pretext of indisposition.

She sat, awaiting the arrival of her guests, in almost breathless impatience—and alone. She did not know whether she was glad or otherwise that she was thus to receive them: Mr. Smith not having come in from the news-room, his usual lounge after afternoon's service. She grew nervous—she began to fancy that they would never come,—and was walking up and down the room hastily, endeavouring to school her agitated spirit into something like composure, when a knock was heard at the hall-door. A moment's delay, while hats, shawls, etc. were disposed of—and then a step,—*his* step upon the stairs. It was a dreadful moment, and she was aware of little more till the first greeting was over,—and Mr. Stukeley had begged permission to introduce a particular friend of his—Captain Duohran, (a showy, military man, with a bold eye, and a corresponding address)—“he durst not have ventured on such liberty everywhere,—but with such an old friend as Harriet—he begged her pardon, Mrs. Smith—(he hoped that lady would recognise his claim) he thought that he might venture to take such a liberty.”

Strive as she would, her colour rose; and her hand trembled, as she shook his, and met that well-remembered face, now in the full beauty of health, with its features settled into the firm contours of manhood. But her confusion told on the side of frigidity—and she was beginning to feel herself a little reconciled to the presence of one who had occupied so large a share

of her thoughts, when a certain clattering sound upon the stairs made her shiver. The door was pushed open, and the master of the house made his appearance, clad in his shabbiest brown suit, having wet his best coat on his way from church, and not being willing to sit in his wet clothes "on any account, for no company whatever."

She presented both the gentlemen to him; and it did not escape her quick eye that a suppressed smile of amazement and ridicule passed over their faces, as she made the introduction; and, she almost thought, was partaken of, and answered by Susan. This roused the better part of her nature at once,—in an instant, she became as composed as she had been agitated, and could play the hostess with an ease and dignity which surprised herself. Dinner was announced;—Stukeley took his seat at her right hand;—his manner puzzled her, because it was changed from what she had known it, and she could not exactly define in what point. At last she settled it to her own satisfaction. He was more sentimental and less sincere than formerly, and disposed, so she thought, to be confidential, and to recur, in an under tone, to those pleasant days of the past. But she would neither understand nor encourage him,—for she felt the hollowness of his behaviour, and was careless whether or not he came to the conclusion that she had been changed into a haughty and reserved lady by her very extraordinary marriage.

What a comfort it is that the most trying evening will end, as well as the pleasantest merry-making!—When she had leisure to analyze her own thoughts, their sum was unmixed pain, the pain of being compelled to feel contempt in the place of former regard. Moreover, the idea that Susanna was using every artifice in her power, of flattery and implicit agreement with every word that he uttered, to make an impression upon Mr. Stukeley's heart, would occur to her, in spite of herself. And he was so unlike the hero of the sick-chamber:—grown so frivolous and courtly. Perhaps she did him injustice,—but no measure of dislike was too great for Captain Duchran. He was positively odious;—and Mr. Smith, what could he mean, by so angrily shutting up the Messiah in the very midst of her song?—There was nothing but discomfort in every remembrance; great was her vexation of spirit, all the greater for knowing that there was no one to whom she could or would confide her fancies—no one who would sympathize with her, and that any advice which she might offer to her sister, would assuredly be offered in vain.

But let me not be tedious, though a tale of small trials demands minuteness in detail. She was not astonished that

Stukeley prolonged his stay many days beyond the time originally fixed for his departure;—but she did feel surprised, and, in the secret of her heart, a little chagrined, that he made no further attempt to renew his old acquaintance with her! Her sister's conduct she thought very unsisterly. She was going to leave home, but never came near her,—never asked for her opinion, or called for her sympathy;—and her indisposition which rather increased, probably owing to the slightly irritated state of her mind, and the extreme delicacy of her baby's health, were sufficient reasons for her staying at home. As for Mrs. Robinson she never stirred abroad, except upon state occasions; but Susan was very, very unkind!—and surely she had not given Mr. Stukeley any offence?

So ran the current of her thoughts, when, late on the Friday evening, she was considerably surprised by receiving a hurried message from her sister, entreating her to come to her immediately, "as she was in the utmost distress." Harriet was startled, as may be supposed, and calling the old family servant in, questioned her.

"Are you sure, Ann, that there is no mistake?"

"Quite sure, Ma'am! she would have written, Ma'am, Miss Susanna would, but her hand was in such a tremble that she could not hold the pen."

"Is my mother—?"

"Now don't go frighten yourself—my mistress has nothing that ails her—she only went to bed a little tired, because—"

"What can have happened?—George,"—(to the servant who obeyed the bell) "call me a coach instantly—or stay—I will not wait—my cloak and snow shoes!"

"Such a night!" exclaimed the man as he left the room, "and my mistress going to walk!"

"Are my mother and sister alone?"

"Quite alone, Ma'am.—Mr. Stukeley went away this morning, with Captain Duchran."

"Went away!—you may go—I will follow you immediately," said Harriet, relieved she knew not why.

The distance was soon passed over, in spite of the furious equinoctial gale, and rain which saturated her cloak, ere she had reached the end of the street, Susanna opened the door, with a face which was the very picture of dismay. "Only you, Harriet! how provoking! I thought I knew the knock."

"You sent for me, though,—and I am here—what is the matter?"

"The matter," resumed her sister pettishly, "what a comfort it is that mamma is in bed?"

"Is she ill then? O why did you not tell me before?"

"Pray—pray stop—do not go up stairs, I beg of you—she is quite well—quite as well as usual."

"What can have happened, then, that you have sent for me at such an unusual hour?"

"Come into the parlour," said Susanna, "and you shall know all."

Harriet followed her sister, silently wondering what cause of grief could have stirred her into such a ferment of anxiety; she seemed in that state of restlessness in which stillness is impossible, and paced the room hastily, without speaking.

"Sister," said Harriet, approaching her and taking her hand tenderly——She let it fall in an instant, and stood gazing upon Susanna with a frigid glance, from which, for the moment, reason seemed to have departed: at length she said in a low voice, "Sister, is that a wedding ring?"

"It is," replied the other, in the same suppressed whisper, "we were married this morning—why are you so much shocked?"

"Look me in the face, Susanna, and answer me one question. Had he—had *you* any idea of this when he was our guest?"

Susanna hung her head, and blushed with shame and consciousness.

"It seems then," continued Harriet, "that we did not exchange confidences; I told you of my girlish folly—but you—O how have you hidden yourself from me!—But it matters not now," and her voice became firmer as she proceeded, "what is done, is done—where is your husband?—does my mother know?—I am afraid not—where is Stukeley?"

Her question opened the flood gates of Susanna's grief. They were to have departed on the next morning for Stukeley Priory.

"Have you written thither?—would it not be better to wait for Sir Giffard's answer?—I am afraid—they say that he is a very proud and passionate man."

"Written!—good Heavens! what would become of us, if he were to know it yet? but what matters it now?—Stukeley is gone—left me at the church door, to go round the Rock with Captain Duchran in the Philadelphia, and he has not yet come back.—Do you hear the wind?—something must have befallen him!—and what am I to do?—what is to become of me?—he *would* go, in spite of all that I could say!" and she walked passionately to and fro, weeping and wringing her hands.

Nothing farther was to be extracted from Susanna, and to comfort her seemed a task of even greater difficulty. What panacea is there which can allay the suspense of an ill-regulated

mind? To inquire whether the pilot boats had returned, was the only step to be taken, and on this errand Harriet despatched her own servant; this being done, nothing remained but to wait his return with patience. What strangely different thoughts occupied the two sisters, while they sat listening to the heavy rain falling, and the wind which blew in sudden gusts, as some writer quaintly says, "like the devil fetching his breath,"—the one enduring the agonies of suspense and the anxiety of uncertain prospects, the other feeling certain, no less from inward conviction, than the gist of recent events, that her selfish sister had advised her to contract a marriage in every respect hateful to herself, not without some idea of reaping the benefit of her own advancement from the sacrifice!

So passed the hours till midnight. Martin had returned with tidings that the boats had none of them yet come back. Midnight brought Mr. Smith in search of his wife, exceedingly angry at her absence from home, which wrath he vented in no very choice language.

"It does not look well, Harriet," said he, "being out of your own house at such a time of night, and leaving no word, as if you were coming to seek after strange gentlemen."

"Sir!" cried Harriet, starting to her feet.

"Did you not," pursued her coarse husband, "call out *Harry* when my knock came to the door?—I heard you—and do you think I never heard you painted his picture, and had a lock of his hair—it was your own sister told me. I say, Harriet, it does not look well!"

Here was another proof of Susanna's artfulness; but Harriet was past the power of her wiles, and managed to command her temper, and repress the indignation which was so near her lips. "You are displeased at me," replied she with dignity, "without any cause; the gentleman, on account of whose absence my sister is suffering so much alarm, became her husband this morning!"

"O Harriet! what made you tell him?" cried Susan with selfish eagerness. Her sister made no reply, and had compassion enough, for her present distress to refrain from even looking towards her.

"I am ready to attend you home, Sir," said she; "Martin shall stay, if you wish to send him anywhere else, Susanna;" and she left the room with as calm a demeanour, and as steady a step, as if she had not that moment been wounded to the heart, by discovering the heartless duplicity of her sister. It is amazing to think how much injustice and dishonesty some can bear to discover without their happiness and trust being utterly de-

stroyed. I do not, however, profess to tell for how short a time Harriet closed her eyes that night.

Morning came, but still no news of the fugitive: and as the gale had, for some hours, been very high, she began to entertain serious forebodings that no good news *would* come. She was sitting alone after breakfast, with her infant upon her knee, but thinking less of its bright smiles and dove-like eyes, than how she might best arm herself against any new shock, when her servant suddenly threw open the door and announced Mr. Stukeley. She hastily put her baby in the cradle,—rose,—and delighted that one, at least, of her gloomy presentiments had not been fulfilled, ran forward to greet her visitor with an involuntary cordial, “O Harry!”—but she shrunk back, on being confronted by a tall, stately-looking gentleman, six feet high at least, with a gray head, fearfully black eye brows, and large stern eyes beneath the same; a figure, whom any painter would welcome as a perfect God-send, were he wishing to introduce a Spanish grandee into one of his pictures. “*Sir Giffard Stukeley*,” said he, bowing very ceremoniously, “I presume you were prepared to receive my son.”

Harriet was confounded beyond the power of speaking, and could only make a motion intended to be a curtsy, and point to a chair upon which the Inquisitor (in the midst of all her perturbation, she could not avoid mentally giving that title to her visitor) vouchsafed to sit down. Then, fixing upon her face those awful eyes of his, he pursued his interrogatories.

“I am here, Madam, most unexpectedly—an accidental occurrence obliged me suddenly to travel northward, on business, and when I came so near to this place, as to be within thirty miles of it, I could not resist the temptation of running over; more especially as I was beginning to think that my son was somewhat exceeding the limits of his furlough.”

“Captain Duchran went to sea yesterday morning,” faltered out Harriet.

“O then most probably my son waited to see him off. They were old college friends, I would never have people forget old friends and kindnesses. I called upon your mother an hour ago, but was not so fortunate as to gain admittance: and have ventured to apply to you for my son’s address, which he omitted to send to me. This will explain to you the reason of so early an intrusion. I cannot hear of him at any of the hotels.”

“Really, Sir,” said Harriet, whose confusion increased with every word she uttered, “I can hardly tell you—I am in some anxiety—I believe that Mr. Stukeley went with his friend on board the *Philadelphia*, and am in momentary expectation of

hearing that he has returned. But here is a note from my sister which will tell us."

She seized the billet from the hands of the servant with eagerness, and broke the seal. Its contents were extraordinary. It seemed that the boatmen who took the two gentlemen out to the Philadelphia had believed that they were *both* on their way to America, and had therefore steered quietly homewards, while Harry and his friend were exchanging adieus in the cabin. But their return had been interrupted by the sudden storm I have described, and they had only just arrived bringing to Susanna the negative comfort of the idea that the newly married man was likely to be treated with an impromptu voyage to Baltimore, unless the Philadelphia should chance to fall in with some vessel homeward bound. In spite of the nervous predicament in which her sister stood, with respect to Sir Giffard, Harriet could hardly help smiling at the singularity of the adventure; she was at a loss, however, in what manner she should communicate the tidings to the Baronet, and gave him her sister's note for himself to read. As his eye glanced over it, he seemed mightily disturbed.

"Here is something which I cannot understand—*Stukeley—my husband*," said he, with a bewildered air "what——"

"Good Heavens! I had forgotten!" exclaimed she, with vivacity;—and then approaching him with that winning sweetness which is so irresistible in a young and beautiful woman, so graceful when worn to persuade a man whose age gives an almost filial character to the persuasion, "I did not mean to deceive you, Sir Giffard," said she, "but this note puts it out of my power, had I even thought of such unworthy conduct. Its contents are hardly more amazing to you than to myself. It was only last night, Sir, that I heard, for the first time,"—she spoke as stoutly as she could, to hide her fear, "that Mr. Stukeley might present to you a daughter-in-law instead of a governess."

It is not in the power of words to describe the changes which passed over Sir Giffard's countenance while she proceeded, nor how the scorn, the surprise, the displeasure which alternately possessed his features, merged at last in a contempt of such concentrated bitterness, that it withered her to meet it. "And am I to believe," said he, "that it was *only last night* for the first time, that you became acquainted with this—this unfortunate affair?"

Her spirit was somewhat aroused as she answered. "I can repeat my words, Sir Giffard, if you will: I have told neither more nor less than the truth, and to have told it once is enough. But as I see that you do *not* believe me, and as I feel my own

and my mother's honour concerned in the proving to you that this has been no scheme devised by us to entangle Mr. Stukely in a connexion unknown to the rest of his family, I must mention to you, what I hope will set your doubts at rest, as to our connivance;—a circumstance, Sir, which many women would find it impossible to produce in their defence, and which—but *you* are a gentleman," (he bowed,) "you will understand the violence I am doing my feelings in attempting to satisfy my suspicions; and respect my secret."

She paused, uncertain in what manner she could shape her communication so as to give a hint and no more, of her own private feelings, and of the scene of last night, as regarded Mr. Smith's ridiculous jealousy; but, while she was debating with herself, whether she *could* explain herself, without going too far, even for such a good purpose as that of mollifying Sir Giffard's suspicions, he arose, and took her hand with a lofty kindness which might even have become a prince:

"Not a word more, madam, if you please," said he, "I ask for no confidences, I have no right to any, and I will believe you without putting you to any pain. The thing is done, and I must reconcile myself to it, as I best can. I mean no disrespect to yourself, far the contrary: for, had I come acquainted with so—so—*strange* an event, in any other mode, I should probably have received the tidings less graciously. I am proud—but I can value such noble-mindedness as you have proved yourself to possess. You must forgive my freedom—I have heard something of your history, and I do not think that a marriage undertaken out of filial piety is chargeable with mercenary motives;" (tears burst into Harriet's eyes as he spoke). "If the young lady prove but half as exemplary a daughter, as I have heard her sister has been, and as I see, and *feel* that she must be, she shall find me not unreasonable, nor I hope unkind. In short, madam, I take my leave of you, with my respect for you much heightened by this interview. May God bless you! for you deserve it."

This unlooked-for mildness on Sir Giffard's part, completely overcome poor Harriet, to whom the language of sympathy and approbation had been so long an unknown tongue. She could not reply—but she felt that she was understood and esteemed, and that words mattered not; and as the door closed upon her stately guest, she felt as if she would rather be—(for, for that instant she forgot the wig, and the snuff, and the brown leggings, and the voice like the sound of a saw), in her own place at that moment, than in her sister's, if feelings were to be exchanged as well as fortunes. Such moments cancel the memory of long months of suffering and soreness of heart!



## PART II.

A CHASM of six years is now to be crossed by the storyteller and his audience;—six years unchequered by as many incidents. Upon returning from his forced voyage, Mr. Stukeley took his wife abroad; for his father did not find in her the comfort which he had expected. 'Sir Giffard died before his son had been married quite two years, and Susanna was then exalted into the wife of one of the richest Baronets in Hampshire. Who will not sicken at the thought of the meanness of the human heart, when it is told that, from that moment, she slowly and steadily withdrew herself from her own family! She pleaded that her health was bad—she was an indifferent correspondent;—Sir Harry expected her to devote so much of her time to him. She had even recourse to the shameful subterfuge of pretending to be hurt by some passage in one of her mother's letters,—who, never very clear-headed, grew more misty and confused every day, and was fast approaching a second state of childishness. After this, total silence ensued;—Harriet was too indignant to waste any further time in keeping up a correspondence with one so heartless,—and Sir Harry Stukeley finally fixed his residence at Florence. Poor Mrs. Robinson thought that letters were very long in coming, and used to expatiate to every one that called upon Susanna's devotedness to her young family—forgetting, however often set right, that her married life was unblest by any child.

And where was Harriet at the end of these six years?—Very near the spot at which she stood on her wedding day;—so indulgently had time treated her round cheeks, and her bright eyes. Some ancient writer quaintly affirms that—"there is noe cosmeticke like a gode herte," and, in her case, the secret seemed worth knowing, so little changed was her loveliness, except, perhaps, that the expression of her features was heightened by her acquaintance with the affections of maternity.

"Her pleasing person she with care adorned,"

some said, with too much solicitude; but if her love of her toilet was a foible, it was almost her only one; nor did she indulge in it to enhance the value of her charms in the world's opinion, as she had almost entirely given up society, being willing to make any sacrifice for the preservation of peace at

home. Years had not sweetened Mr. Smith's originally saturnine and churlish temper;—his concession in the matter of receiving Mrs. Robinson into his house, must be regarded partly as a measure by which so much unnecessary outlay of money was saved—partly, as being a return for his wife's uniform kindness towards a crew of the vulgarest husband's relations, wherewith it ever pleased Heaven to try the patience of an unfortunate woman; Mr. Smith having been always considered, not only as the great man, but also the gentleman of the family.

It was well that Harriet's cheerfulness of spirit prevented her from dwelling long upon any annoyance, otherwise the addition to her home trials of the occasional visits of her husband's first cousin, Mrs. Crickett, would have been sufficient to fret her patience to death. This was an ignorant, surly-tempered fat woman, (how oppressive, by the way, is the ill-humour of the corpulent, were it only for giving the lie to a jolly old proverb!)—a woman who left trouble and heart-burning behind her wherever she went, and only relaxed her dislike of her kind, in the case of Harriet, upon whom she was willing to bestow much more of her company than was agreeable; and yet the object of her favour was a poor recipient of scandal—she had nothing to contribute to Mrs. Crickett's *cairn* of aversions and evil rumours. That lady, too, had the happy knack of breaking in upon her friends at those peculiarly precious moments of leisure, when the company of one's nearest and dearest friends is felt to be an annoyance. One day, she would interrupt a music lesson, (Harriet was indefatigable in keeping up her music, in spite of the palseying lack of the stimulus afforded by any occasional listener, except her master)—she would, on another, show her unwelcome face when the young mother (with her child asleep beside her) was setting absorbed in the perusal of some favourite book, and had just reached that most interesting point, at which one devours rather than reads its pages. She was remarkable for her contempt of wind and rain if she wished to come abroad; and for her terror of so little as a zephyr or a dew-fall when it was time to go home. She always came when Mr. Smith was absent on a journey; “Cousin Harriet must feel so lonely!”—and made herself so completely distasteful to her relative, that, in the secret playfulness of her heart, the latter used to vent her vexation by calling her “her Arch-antipathy.”

One morning Mrs. Smith had scarcely opened her piano to luxuriate in the first trial of some of Beethoven's immortal compositions for that instrument, when the well-known tramp and cough were heard in the ante-drawing-room. For once,

Harriet was resolved to try whether her visiter was penetrable by a broad hint, and played on sedulously, till a huge hand was spread upon her shoulder, and she had no further excuse for not turning round, and wishing her wearisome guest good morning.

"Good morning, cousin Harriet!—I am come in good time, I see, to prevent you wearing yourself to a shadow over that music; mercy upon us! what sums of money it has cost you!" and, heaving an enormous sigh, she plunged into a well-cushioned easy chair.

"Were you not afraid," said Harriet archly, "to venture out on such a wild day?"

"Me, love?—O, it's very tolerable out of doors, only a little wind, I assure you; not that I would go everywhere, I promise you; but I thought you would be wondering what was become of me, and you never sent to inquire after me. Those servants of yours have a fine easy life of it, and, mercy upon us! what wages you give them!"

"I will profit by your hint another time," thought Harriet, "but I fear it will not avail me much."

"Bless me, cousin! and so you have had your rooms new furnished since I was here! well to be sure, and in the bad times, too!—and, as I have a soul to be saved, with silk damask! I tell you what, I think Smith had better mind what he is about; silk damask, indeed!"

"Why," replied Harriet, always glad to steer clear of persons, "the chintz was dropping to pieces;—I hope, however, that you admire my taste?"

"Yours, is it? red enough in all conscience!—and, come near me, your cap!—Valenciennes, I declare!—ah!—well, well,—poor thing! I hope what people say isn't true!" and she fetched another ominous and plethoric sigh—but Harriet's curiosity was still undisturbed. She then tried fresh ground: "Have you been out lately?"

"Scarcely at all for this last month, since Mamma has been confined above stairs."

"Ay, she'll not last long, I reckon. Did Smith tell you that Blackie and Dunstanridge had failed?"

"No, indeed," replied Harriet, yawning; "you know Mr. Smith cannot bear to be asked any questions about his business."

"He cannot bear!—you do not care—that is the way it goes. Cousin Harriet, I hear strange tales about Smith; he should buy cheaper lace for you than Valenciennes; and a worsted damask, ay, or a good moreen might serve him to sit upon, if all tales are true I hear. Bad times indeed!—and look at mer-

chant's wives sitting, like queens, in their silks and satins on week-day mornings, with their feet upon foot-stools. Talk to me of bad times! I wonder what all their grandeur will end in!"

"Upon my word, cousin, I think you must be bilious; you don't often scold me in this way."

"Scold?—mercy upon us! me scold a fly!—People are talking, cousin Harriet,—people are talking, and I am sorry for you. I heard Mr. Bland say it was only this morning that he had been told that Smith —"

"You must excuse my listening," said Harriet, turning towards her instrument with a very decided air; "you know I never listen to anything, save my own music."

"Upon my word! high and mighty with a vengeance!—What will you say, my lady, if your husband be a bankrupt before he is a month older?"

"I will never step out of my way to meet any sorrow;—these left-hand passages are so cramped," and she ran over the keys.

"Let me tell you," cried the widow, "that Smith is behaving shamefully, if —"

"Nay, cousin, if you please, no reflections upon my husband! It is wrong in you to speak them, and I *will* not listen to them,"—and she began in good earnest and bad time.

"How is your sister, Lady Stukeley, and when did you hear from her last?" cried Mrs. Crickett, raising her voice, so as even to drown the thunder of Broadwood's *best patent grand*, "I should not a bit wonder if it prove that her match turns out the best of the two, after all!"

"I must leave you," said Harriet, rising and drawing on her gloves impatiently; "good morning—I am sorry that I cannot stay with you; I will send you in some luncheon directly, and hope you will remain till you are rested."

There was, indeed, no other way of preventing Mrs. Crickett from disburdening her satchell of its contents, but that of leaving her in solitude; and Harriet hoped that she would depart speedily. She stayed, however, to do justice to the luncheon, and, it has been surmised, confided a part of her secret to the butler, who was a discreet man, with a fine solemn face for a confidence. As for her ill-omened gossip, it did not linger in Harriet's ear for an hour: she had been always spared the coming in contact with money matters, by Mr. Smith insisting to pay every bill belonging to the house; and, as he had done so without any objection, and had duly put into her hands a sum sufficient for her own private expenses and charities, she dismissed the subject from her mind, perhaps, too thoughtlessly;

but she had been taught this way of treating grievances by her trying and cheerless lot.

But even Harriet's power of casting off her cares might not, in this instance, have availed her, had not a greater anxiety stared her in the face. Mrs. Robinson's health declined with a rapidity and steadiness which defied the skill of medicine. Death could only be a happy release to the invalid, for she had lost one sense of enjoyment and one faculty after another; but to her daughter the prospect of being deprived of one of her only two sources of comfort, was most appalling. She devoted herself entirely to her mother—rarely left her chamber, and attended to her *indications* (she had hardly strength of mind, or connexion of ideas enough to express her *wishes*) with promptitude and delight that she was permitted to be able to smooth the bed of death. Alas! she felt the bitterness of being alone when any calamity was impending! Of late, it had become her husband's habit to remain long and late at the counting-house, and he never once crossed the threshold of his dying inmate's chamber,—“For,” as he said, “what good could he do to her?—she *must* die!”

At length, the close of Mrs. Robinson's inoffensive life was at hand. Harriet was sitting one evening by her mother's bed, waiting, in melancholy silence, for the arrival of the medical man, and trying to school herself into resignation, when a loud outcry in the house below, caught her attention. All that day there had been something astir:—messengers coming to and fro—gentlemen, who insisted upon seeing Mr. Smith, and would hardly believe the servants who repeated again and again that he was not to be seen,—not at home,—but Harriet had been too much absorbed in her own afflictions to notice these disturbances; and it had seemed as if her maid Tyrell had been able to quiet them more than once. It might be, too, that an indefinable dread prevented her asking any questions. Now, however, the tumult approached nearer than it had hitherto done. Several of the servants were noisily ascending the stairs, and even the invalid was disturbed, turned her head on her pillow, and began uneasily to moan and mutter. Harriet went out to see what was the cause of all this. She had scarcely crossed the threshold when the noise redoubled on her appearance. “There she is!—I will have what is owing to me!—Pay me my wages!” were repeated in as many different tones of insolence, as there were different speakers. Tyrell alone endeavoured to keep some order among the irritated group.

“For shame!—if you *will* disturb my mistress now, cannot you be a little quieter—and with death yonder?”

"What is to be done?" cried Harriet, turning deadly pale, "is your master at home, Tyrell?"

"For God's sake, madam," replied the faithful servant, "do not ask!—and do you, if you have any decency, let be till to-morrow!"

"I'll go this instant out of the house, as soon as ever my wages are paid!" cried one.

"You know my mistress never pays any wages."

"Who is to pay us then, I wonder?" said the butler insolently, "Master's broke, and run away—and there will be bailiffs here to-morrow."

"I say, Tom, we had better help ourselves than get nothing."

"Silence, you brutes or worse!" exclaimed Tyrell,—"lean on me, madam."

"No—no—no," cried Harriet, gasping for breath, and tottering towards the door of her mother's chamber, "I have—tell me how much is owing to you.—Tyrell, go, bring my purse—I will divide the money among them."

One said five guineas—one fifteen, and so forth. She had received some money from her husband, a week or two before, which she had never spent, and hoping it might be sufficient to satisfy them, snatched the purse from the hands of her maid, who had been as quick as lightning, and counted eagerly the gold and bank notes, which it contained. "Thank God, here is just enough, and a guinea over!—Take it, take it all!—and leave me at peace!"

"Surely, madam, you are not going to leave yourself with only that one guinea?—Who knows what you may want yourself?—for it's all true about master's running off—the Lord knows where."

"No—no—they shall have it all! only let me be at peace. Tyrell, you will not desert me, I am sure!—Come with me,"—and she turned and left the gaping crowd, half discontented that they had no legitimate reason for prolonging the uproar.

She found the doctor in her mother's chamber. He pronounced it to be his opinion that Mrs. Robinson could not possibly live through the night,—she was sinking so rapidly. Harriet walked to the fire-place, without knowing that she moved. She leaned her forehead against the chimney-piece, whilst the press of agonizing thoughts which swept across her brain, almost entirely deprived her of reason and recollection. The physician had heard the news of Mr. Smith having absconded, in consequence of his shameful bankruptcy,—and though he was old, and seasoned to scenes of domestic affliction, tears streamed down his cheeks, as he took her burning

hand between his own, and said gently, "Dear madam, it is God's will!"

"Is all over?" said Harriet, starting as if from a trance.

"Not yet—she may linger an hour or two; but this—this other cruel news—if I can be of any use—if I can see anybody—"

"Not to-night, doctor," replied Harriet with emotion, "I will forget it, if I can, to-night! it is *hers*—and it is God's merciful will, that she is taken away at this hour! Let us pray that she may suffer no more—I feel your kindness, and Heaven bless you for it, but I do not need it *now*!"

And as she spoke, she knelt solemnly down at her mother's bed-side. The invalid seemed placidly asleep. Harriet approached, as close as she could, to her emaciated cheek, and prayed silently,—and O with what sincerity of agony!—for strength to strive with the burden laid upon her. As she thus poured out her sorrow, the sting of her distress seemed to be gradually withdrawn from her. She began to think, with a calmness that surprised herself, that her mother was departing from her, at that moment, when the sacrifice which she had made was ceasing to avail. She arose from her knees, somewhat more tranquil—she was now willing to resign that darling mother into the hands of Him who made her,—and said softly to the medical man, who regarded her almost with veneration: "There is nothing more which can be done for her!"

"Nothing."

"Susanna!" cried the invalid faintly, partially opening her eyes. Harriet could not contain herself;—she stole to the bed gently, and seizing the clammy hand which was extended upon the counterpane, murmured, "It is I—it is your Harriet!"

"Ay—ay—I know the voice. O, you have been a good daughter to me!—Bless you, Harriet!—I feel no pain:—I am going to sleep again!" and with these words upon her lips, and a smile of affection upon her face, as she turned her glazing eyes upon the kneeling mourner beside her, her spirit passed peacefully away. The benevolent physician stole quietly from the room, and Harriet was alone with the dead.

It was with a feeling of deep submission as well as of natural awe, that she closed the eyes of her departed parent, folded her hands upon her bosom, and then gazed silently upon her remains. Most beautiful is woman's strength of mind at such a moment—but perhaps Harriet was stunned into quietness by the shock of her new calamity. However this might be, she

bent over the body with a tearful but not despairing grief,—feeling the full comfort of the conviction that this was the signal interposition of a merciful Providence in behalf of her mother. She laid herself down upon the bed beside the corpse; and her attendants, who wondered at the deep silence which prevailed in the chamber of death, when at last they ventured to enter it, found her placidly asleep, by the side of the parent for whom she had sacrificed so much—and who was now at rest!

Next morning the town was ringing with the tale of Mr. Smith's flight,—the false entries found in his books,—and not a few other circumstances, which conspired to make his failure a peculiarly disgraceful one: the more so, as he had always borne a fair character. The charge of extravagance had been brought against his wife, by those who had no other fault wherewith to charge her:—whereas, her charities had always exceeded her personal expenditure, and if, as has been hinted, she was a little too fond of dress, she had never kept much company, and had been always allowed by her husband to remain in perfect ignorance as to the state of his affairs. But the merchant's wife is always a favourite mark on such occasions; and as he had placed himself beyond the reach of his creditors, by an untimely flight, she was to be the person upon whom their concentrated vengeance was to fall. And who can wonder that such should be the case? Mr. Smith was known to have settled a very sufficient competence upon her.

Ignorant in matters of business, and guileless as a child, as she was,—her high principle and delicate sense of honour prompted her to take an immediate and decided step. She called for the solicitor, in whose keeping the original deed of settlement was deposited, and conferred with him long and earnestly, and having requested a respite from all annoyance until her mother's remains were interred—alas! she had no male relation to follow them to their last home!—summoned all the principal resident creditors, intimating to them that she had some communication to make to them.

They came, on the morning after poor Mrs. Robinson's funeral,—with heated tempers, and inflexibly stern visages, as they entered the merchant's house, glittering and glowing with all the resplendence of its new decorations. How many a curse was vented upon them! how many a vow of the hard measure they would deal out to her!

Harriet felt her heart sink within her, as one by one they entered the drawing-room, scarcely condescending to bestow the commonest greeting upon so young and lovely a woman, so cruelly abandoned. She was sitting with her solicitor at her



side, dressed in the most unobtrusively simple mourning possible, and for a moment, felt so entirely overcome, as to be unable even to look up. But she rallied her spirits, and desired her guests to be seated. She was almost unable to speak,—feeling, for the first time, the utter helplessness of a deserted wife,—but she feared to exasperate them by any needless delay, and said tremulously, “I am placed in a most painful situation, gentlemen, as you must be aware.”

The chorus replied with a growl of assent.

“I am informed by my friend Mr. Horne,” continued she, “that the engagements of my unfortunate husband greatly exceed his means of meeting them.—I am afraid that I do not express myself clearly.”

“We all understand you. It is true enough.”

“I am told—too, gentlemen, that some blame has been laid upon me,—the blame of having, in some respects, been thoughtlessly expensive. I was as innocent of any intention to do wrong, as a child; for, indeed, I never had the remotest idea that Mr. Smith’s circumstances were at all embarrassed,—and I have sent for you to put you in possession of what this house contains, and to beg that you will receive at my hands such small retribution as it is in my power to make.” She could say no more,—and Mr. Horne, pointing to a parchment, the contents of which he was willing to read, if required, briefly explained that she had insisted upon giving up her marriage settlement for the benefit of her husband’s creditors.

This generosity, or as some openly called it, folly on her part, when once believed—(how long it is before a crowd of angry and worldly people can be convinced of the reality of any noble or disinterested actions!)—wrought an immediate change upon the temper and bearing of the assembled men, to most of whom Harriet was personally a stranger. Beetle brows were unknit, surly voices smoothed,—it was very proper—it was very handsome;—some even got the length of *it was a pity!*—and what would Mrs. Smith do? Mr. Horne was ready with his answer:—Harriet having strained her self-possession to its utmost, and left the room, when she found it beginning to fail her. The ornaments she possessed, when sold, would bring a sum sufficient, with the addition of some small savings, to maintain her respectably until she had decided upon her future plans.

“And what is to become of Master Hugo?” asked the same reasonable personage.

Mr. Horne replied that it would be much easier for her to bring him up upon the fruits of her own exertions, than to allow any stigma which could be prevented to attach itself to his or her name. In short, Mrs. Smith had made up her plans.

"So soon?—and in the absence of her husband!"

Even so—it was concluded that he would not return. The servants had been all discharged, and the lady would remain for only another night under that roof. She had sent for her son from the school at which she had placed him thus early, (it was guessed) to be out of the reach of his father's example, and had already engaged lodgings suited to their fallen fortunes.

"Upon my word," said one of the roughest of the party,—  
"she is a very gallant little woman!—It is hard that she must suffer for Smith's knavery!"

Mr. Horne replied, that so far from suffering, the act she had performed was most particularly satisfactory to Harriet's own private feelings. This was enigmatical to most of the party—but it was true. She had viewed it, in conjunction with her husband's unfeeling desertion, as a breaking of the tie which had united them. The creditors then departed, marvellously softened, and desired that their thanks might be presented to Mrs. Smith, and their grateful sense of her handsome conduct,—and that they should be truly happy to assist her in any arrangement for her convenience, which she might point out. The house was all quiet again,—and Harriet left alone, with the faithful Tyrell, who bluntly and decidedly refused to leave her.

The immediate call upon her own energies had ceased. She had now leisure dispassionately to look at the future. She had already (with a happy decision which would by some be stigmatized as imprudence) resolved upon having recourse to her musical talents. She was young and strong;—her voice she knew was something beyond good. She was already well acquainted with the science of music, and her confidence in her own powers of application to make her voice available, and to perfect her knowledge of the science, was well grounded. She determined — but a dark shadow came and over-clouded the prospect. What if Mr. Smith should re-appear? The mere fancy made her turn sick at heart.

"It will not do," she said, "to terrify myself with such phantoms," and to divert her mind from its fears, she commenced the painful task of collecting what she might honestly call her own possessions—examining letters—burning papers, etc., etc. One heap she committed to the flames, not without a sigh:—a sort of journal kept during the happy six months, in which Stukeley had been her father's guest. He was now her sister's husband and both had cast her off! "Well, though it is very hard," said she, smothering her rising sorrow,—  
"I have my Hugo left me still."

Night overtook her, ere her task was completed. She was

thankful to feel herself weary that she was sure she must sleep—and she did sleep, after a few melancholy thoughts, and a heartfelt prayer,—and she dreamed—but the vision, an impossible mixture of present, past, and future, was suddenly broken.

Our senses are not available in the first moment when we start awake. She fancied that she had heard the well-known sound of the snap-key, jingling in the lock at the front door, as on the nights when her husband was detained late at his counting-house. She started up in bed, and eagerly stretched forward to listen for a repetition of the sound. It was no delusion;—there *was* a step upon the stair!—She knew its very softest tread—the one of all others, which it most terrified her to recognise.—Her husband come back—after the letter he had left on the counting-house desk—that he should be seen and heard of no more—and come back at that dead hour!—it could not be for good! She listened again,—the feet passed her chamber-door—she heard them distinctly, though her terror began to amount almost to a delirium. They returned—the door opened—and Mr. Smith plodded in—unkempt and travel soiled, with a desperation of expression set upon his coarse features, which made him positively hideous.

Harriet sat upright in bed, gazing upon him in perfect silence. He took the night-lamp from the hearth, and approached her. She distinctly saw the butt-end of a pistol peeping out of the breast pocket of his rough coat.

“Good Heavens!” exclaimed she, “what has brought you hither at this awful time?”

“You *are* awake,” replied he, in his usual dry tone :—“I will tell you.”

“What is it?” She trembled so that she could hardly speak :—“what can it be?”

“There is no one in the house but you,” continued he.

“None—save Tyrell.—The servants are all gone. She is sleeping in the nursery.”

“I am going to sail for Tortola to-morrow, with the morning’s tide.”

“Where have you been all this time? Did you know that my mother was dead?”

“All the better :—where I have been is no one’s concern. I have found out that the settlement I made upon you is no longer in Mr. Horne’s keeping.—You have it—it is on the West Indian estates—I will receive the rents for you, unless—” (with a grin) “you are disposed for a voyage thither yourself.”

“I have it not,” replied she, terrified by the reckless coolness of his manner.

"The devil!—Then you must get up, and go to Mr. Horne, and get it from him on any pretext, only get it you must."

"At this time of night!" He seized her arm violently,—for believing him to be possessed by a sudden fit of insanity, she was on the point of ringing the bell to summon Tyrell to her assistance.

"What are you about?—I *must* have that deed, directly—before I sail."

"I have parted with it," replied she, endeavouring to sustain her fast sinking composure.

"What, woman!—what do you dare to tell me?"—and he grasped her arm so fiercely, that she shrieked aloud. Tyrell awakened.

"I gave it up to your creditors this morning. Thank God, Tyrell is coming—I hear her! Help! help! he is murdering me!"

He took the pistol from his breast, and cocked it. "Why! you eternal fool!—I will fire upon whoever enters here!—you have made yourself, and our boy, and myself beggars."

At this instant the cries of the terrified attendant were heard. She had opened the drawing-room windows, and was calling loudly for help. "They are coming, my lady! coming directly!"

"Why, you eternal fool!" shouted Smith, transported by his passion to utter frenzy,—“will you bring the watch upon me? You will ruin us all.”

Quick steps were heard descending the stairs. The hall door was opened, and the guardians of the night admitted by Tyrell. There were three doors into Harriet's chamber. Her wretched husband flew and secured two of them. Ere he could reach the third, his wife was on the floor, and had snatched the pistol from his hand.

"This way!" cried the watchman upon the stairs.

"Give me that pistol!" shouted the desperate man.

"No, no!" cried she, "fly while you can! they will force the door!—down the back stairs—I will send you—I will—" and with a last exertion of force she wrested herself free from his grasp, and whirled the weapon of death through the window. Those without heard the sound, as it crashed through into the street, and under the idea that the miscreant was attempting an escape, hastened round to prevent him. They found nothing however save the stock and the barrel lying in two separate places, and made haste back to the house. They had to force the door of Harriet's chamber,—and when they entered it, she was lying upon the floor, thoroughly insensible, with a rent fragment of cloth, clutched fast in her hand!

I have reached the termination of Harriet's early trials. These last shocks were almost too much for even her elastic spirit to recover from; but the Almighty sends healing with Time, and she was able, ere long, to pursue her original intentions: now, unshackled by any one,—for months elapsed ere she heard of Smith, whose absence from England was a matter of necessity. To conclude my tale as respects him, I should say, that having found out his retreat, this excellent and forgiving creature actually contrived to send him occasional supplies of money, a kindness which he had neither heart to feel, nor decency to acknowledge, save by reiterated importunities. But he only lived four years after his failure, and it was a relief to every body to be able to forget one, whose character was so little endearing, and whose solitary kind action had been paid for by the happiness of his wife's youth.

She was thenceforth left to her own devices; at the time when he disappeared from England, little more than twenty-five years of age, with good health, and a spirit which had proved too strong to be broken by the wearing of daily vexation, or the thunder-clap of sudden calamity. She began by consigning Hugo to the care of an excellent old clergyman who had known Mrs. Robinson in the days of her prosperity,—and then, she,—who had never in her life, travelled further than to London, on her miserable wedding journey,—prepared, alone, to encounter the difficulties of a continental tour. In the first agony of her bereavement, she had written to the Stukeleys, mentioning her future plans. She received, only the day before she left England, a laconic answer, containing a proper set of phrases of regret for the loss of "their excellent parent," and an utter discouragement of her *thinking of coming to Italy*. She was too proud to ask for further counsel or assistance from such cold-hearted relatives, and pursued her own straight-forward way, undismayed by the sneers and forebodings of the million, always more ready to censure than to assist.

What befell her from this time, until she reappeared as Madame Fabbioni, (the name given to her in the Conservatorio where she studied) the friend, from whom I learned the foregoing particulars, could not, or would not tell me, not so much as whether she ever did meet with her unkind sister and weak husband, nor the place to which Mr. Smith had fled, and in which he perished, lamented by no one; I suppose it to have been some of the smaller West India Islands.

I have followed Harriet through her trials; there is no need to record her triumphs, which, as a concert singer, were without drawback or alloy. The same enthusiasm and buoyancy of spirit which had maintained her through the miseries of her

ied life, conducted her to success in the profession she had  
on ; and, had she consented to appear upon the stage, she  
t doubtless have realized a splendid fortune, as it is pro-  
that her acting might have equalled her singing. As it  
she gave to her son the education of a gentleman,—sent  
to college, as his wishes inclined towards the church ;—  
on the evening when I first heard her, bade farewell to  
audits and excitements of public life, to retire with him  
living which had been presented to him by a nobleman  
had heard a part of her story,—and thus, in the prime of  
eauty and talents, withdrew to its seclusion,—the happiest  
an in England, followed by the regrets of many, and the  
lionate regard of the few whom she had received as  
ds.

## THE STREETS, No. VI.

## A PROCESSION DAY.

IN spite of the superior experience of the travelled, who quench the first mention of anything at home being worth enjoying, with—"When I was driving along the Linden strasse at Vienna ——" or "at Rome they do thus ——" in spite of the austere and learned, who rebuke one's gaiety with—"loss of time!" "frivolity!" etc. etc. etc.—a sight is a good thing, and a profitable one, if rightly taken,—from the antics of Punch, or a ruseful monkey compelled to execute *entrechats* in a spangled turban and crimson petticoat, up to the more stately shows of the ascent of a balloon, a review, or a procession. There is always to me, a great pleasure in watching the motions and the moods of a crowd of people; and if their gathering be a little tricked out with the trumpery of flags and devices, the show is surely none the worse because it pleases the eyes of some—let them be of no higher class than sweeps and servant maids—as well as furnishes food for the fancies of the day-dreamer.

But, if the spectacle happen to chime in with our own humour, even we may not look upon the tinsel, and be not ashamed to smile, though, like Goldsmith's Tenterden lady, "we have been at London!" For instance, if it be an election procession, (as it is to-day) and our favourite candidate is to be chaired, we can regard it with peculiar complacency, and make allowance for the zealous dissonance of provincial wind instruments,—and for the inscriptions upon banners, more pompous than wise. Come, then, courteous companion, whoever you be, that have accompanied us in our former rambles, draw your easy chair close to the window,—we will look out into the street beneath us, and chat pleasantly about the things which have been a-doing for the last ten days, till the procession shall pass by. This very morning for a gala,—bright, but not too sultry, breezy, but not boisterous:—a Saturday morning, when the throngs of market carts, with their loads of country ware and country people, give such a peculiar air of health and plenty to our thoroughfares. The shower of last night has laid the dust beautifully; and that row of stunted elms in yonder opposite churchyard looks positively tempting, dressed in the fresh spring green of May. They will be torn and mis-

erable enough before night—for the children have already discovered that a show looks all the better for being seen whilst swinging among green boughs. It were useless to attempt to settle any serious occupation on this, the last day of the week, after the foregoing six have been spent in the bustle and excitement of electioneering ;—

“ You were in the ——— interest, of course ? ”

True to politics, *notre ami*—what if we were venal enough to belong to both sides, as occasion served ?—at all events, we are triumphant now. What a stir the contest made ! or rather *bargain* it should be called, when the strife was betwixt purse and purse, rather than principle and principle ! But let us leave the question of bribery, and all other grave questions, for the present, and content ourselves with remembering the humours of the days of struggle. No enthusiasm in the English character, as foreigners sometimes complain !—why, for the last week, our streets have worn an appearance positively carnivalesque !—the fronts of the large shops exhibiting gay party-colours, and the windows of all such as were near the scene of action, occupied, from morning till evening, by animated groups of people who could not stay at home, but must come down, in despite of blazing sun and biting wind, to see the polling. And it was a curious sight ;—the street, at the upper end of which the hustings stood, presented the unique picture of a pavement of heads of persons of all classes, all ages, all interests, each one gaily caparisoned with red or blue ribbons,—women, with children on their backs, despising the terrors of a crowd, nay, liking the scene all the better for a tolerably strict squeeze now and then ;—gentlemen haranguing *independent freemen*, and shaking hands pump fashion, with as many as showed a tendency towards the right colour, till one would think that every canvasser must have bespoken spare muscles and sinews for the occasion, to abide the strain of that tremendous cordiality ;—*macaronies* receiving the confidence of mud-larks ;—short-sighted persons endowed with a miraculous clearness of vision :—and all this mass of human life rammed into a comparatively narrow street, so tightly, that you could hardly guess how a single individual could be extricated therefrom without the consent of his thousand neighbours. Once in every half hour, however, the riddle was solved, by some riot or other taking place near the hustings,—then the quick, heavy, pom-melling sound of fists was heard,—then the sharper notes of the constables’ staves, (who endeavoured to part the combatants, *à la St. John Long*, by establishing a system of counter-irritation) and the huge company of people were dispersed hither and thither, like beads spilled out of a box, expanding



themselves over every neighbouring street, court, and alley, to re-assemble as soon as the temporary feud (most probably undertaken for some party token) was pacified.

How intense was the interest displayed by the spectators—intense as it was unreasonable! It is, indeed, curious to think with how little prepossession, on what slight ground of reason, the most passive and phlegmatic may, at such a time, be wrought up into a state which gives to the most trite phrases of oratory the power of pure original eloquence, and makes you as sensible of the sting of some inane party sarcasm, as if it were envenomed by the wit of a Wolcot or a Swift. What can be less edifying, for instance, than the evening speeches of the opposing candidates, who, hoarse and jaded, and worn out by anxiety, must be, with rare exceptions, far past the power of commanding any words or thoughts beyond the merest commonplaces sufficient to elicit cheers from the mob of their partisans. Yet the excitement and delight are not to be forgotten with which, on a former occasion, we awaited, in a balcony, the return of the candidate of our choice from the hustings,—and the avidity with which we listened to him when he did come! It was at the beginning of winter,—fair, frosty weather,—a bright crescent moon, with half a dozen stars around her, smiled peacefully down upon the street beneath us, touching the gathering groups with an imperfect shine, made them absolutely picturesque. At last, after long waiting, the far-off roll of drums was distinctly heard, then the sound of wind instruments;—how willingly was their want of taste, tune, and time forgiven! And when the procession filed close up under our windows, amid the cheers of the people, who made way for their favourite to pass—the feeling of the moment was more deliciously intense than we can now easily bring ourselves to believe.

And how the gentler half of our inhabitants have been moved on both sides of the question. *Place aux dames* on every possible occasion;—but we wonder why they should ever enter the coil of politics, why they should ever involve themselves in the considerations of those heart-perplexing mysteries which the wisest and best experienced of men are scarcely able to unravel,—why, when by their position they are happily fenced off from the knowledge of so much that is acting around them, they should come forward to debate and wrangle upon subjects on which they cannot possibly be fully informed without partially unsexing themselves. Doubtless there have been many women (there are some among us at this moment) who could assume such cares and thoughts without losing much of that retired dignity which is so exclusively feminine; nor are the cold and indifferent worthy of our praise or love. How do our

hearts go along with the Spanish martyr sisters, who suffered at the stake, together with their brother, a priest, and when pressed (with the dread of mortal torments before their eyes,) to abjure their faith, simply and briefly refused, alleging "that they were sure that what their brother believed must be the truth," and adding, "he is too wise to be wrong, and too good to deceive us." How noble, how excellent was this their constancy,—their trust in his stronger mind! How much more endearing this modesty of their reply than if they had wordily expatiated upon the erroneous doctrines of the persecuting church! How much higher toned than the pretension, in the strength whereof so many enter into the arena of controversy, with as much confidence as if they wielded an iron mace instead of a bull-rush. And, only because we love them all the more for enlisting their sympathies in what concerns their nearest and dearest, can we forgive them, if, at a time like the present, the enthusiasm of their natural temperament lead them into not a few extravagances, and converts them into fierce and devoted partizans; and we are not disposed to do more than smile because one is won by the noble air and manly address of her favourite, and the other professes herself to be convinced by the liberality of his opponent's sentiments and declarations. The fire, which has thus been kindled, will soon subside;—before a week is over, all this bitterness and heat will soon be forgotten like the things of a dream. Heaven forbid that our English wives and sisters should cease to think as well as feel; but forbid it also, that they should become clamorous and eager disputants, or worse, intrigues, manoeuvring themselves into power and influence by means of the fascinations with which they have been so liberally endowed.

But this discursiveness (for which, by the way, we shall have some difficulty in obtaining a pardon) must not deprive us of the use of our eyes. The street is now filling rapidly;—the groups of quiet and patient sight-seers, who, for the last two hours, have occupied all the good places upon steps, etc. have received many important additions, since we took our last survey. Every moment, the crowd is increased and animated by some artizan, dressed in his Sunday clothes, with a rosette at his button hole, or some tall hoyden of a girl, with a red-hot face, loose bonnet strings, and short petticoats, who is thoroughly *au fait* as to all the arrangements of the procession, having left it at another part of the town, and run thither. And only remark the ridiculous figures of some of the children, who, ever and anon, in spite of the sharp eyes and sharper voices of their mothers, straggle out into the middle of the street—little queer-looking images, with which one could fill a score of

sketch-books. Look at that urchin yonder in a sailor's jacket, which clothes his stumpy figure from head to foot, after a sort of barrel fashion. He is crowned, too, with a shapeless seal-skin cap of no colour, garnished with a faded ribbon, bearing the "Peace and Plenty" motto of some former election. Nor is his sister a whit less picturesque,—that fat child who cries incessantly, pinned up in an old red shawl covering her arms, which stick out, on either side, at right angles,—and who wears an old doll, sans wig, limbs, and eyes, slung about her neck, and a beaver hat and feather, which has served all her nine baby brothers and sisters in turn. Now, too, is the time for observing all the small flirtations which are carried on between clean, clever looking youths in blue coats and gay neckerchiefs, and the maidens who garnish the upper windows, and who wave favours in reply to their upward nods, at once tender and patronizing. That cart, too, drawn up at the end of the street, is a picture in itself, with its rough old horse, and primitive harness:—you could fancy that it had creaked out of one of Gainsborough's or Moreland's landscapes, even if you took no account of the family party who occupy it,—father, mother, and daughter. They have disposed of their garden stuff, and are sitting upon their empty baskets, possessing their souls in patience, until the Parliament man shall go by, the old man—like Mr. Grogan the common-councilman, having a strong proclivity towards a doze. See,—to show their homely attire, and awkward, but not stupid figures in all the stronger contrast,—a smart knowing-looking sailor lad has stationed himself close to Dobbin's head, and in the intervals between the sufficiently quick discharge of a battery of glances against a rosy lass, (we suspect in a window above our head) entertains himself by perusing the young lady's countenance with a glance more free than it is welcome, as may be seen by her dogged, downcast, conscious face—for that she is no flirt may be inferred from the particularly rustic cut of her bonnet, and the old-maidish disposition of her brown and yellow cotton handkerchief. You may divine that the wearables aforesaid, with her mother's chintz gown, (which reminds one, one knows not why, of the days of Pamela,) are reverently laid by all together in some grave looking, antique, oaken chest. You may see how much the old woman is delighted with the innocent ways of the fair white-frooked child, in yonder balcony, who is too young to know the difference between cloth of gold and cloth of frieze, and showers compliments on the party in the cart, out of the abundance of her good will. You can follow the three home to their quiet cottage, a dozen miles hence, and listen to their slow shrewd talk—

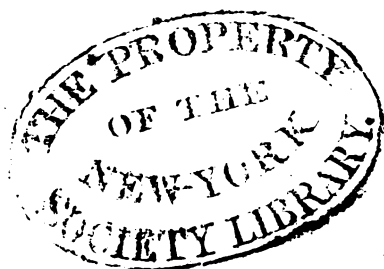
"How fine the folks were dressed!—and how the member took off his hat to our Peggy—and how he was nothing to look at, after all—and what a power of money his chair must have cost him!"

But the cry is—"They come!"—Hark!—the roar of distant cheering—the sudden exhilarating burst of the trumpets and drums—and again their increasing clangour as the show advances! You can now see, in the distance, a vista of gay streamers—a sea of people marching hitherward, and, whenever the wind wafts the flags a little aside, something which at this distance, looks not unlike a splendid Twelfth cake, surmounted by its monarch. Fie! that we dare compare our member in his chair, to a child of the oven!—and yet we would rather be that cake and that king, to be abandoned to the tender mercies of little masters and misses, in all the keenness of their holiday hunger,—than standing the place of him who is kissing his hand, and bowing so fervently, and think that this ceremonial is only the threshold to the wear and tear of a session in the House of Commons.

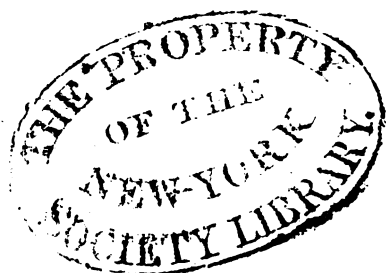
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Can I bring my book to close at a more auspicious moment, than amid the cheerings of a merry multitude, and the swell of triumphant music? Surely this is the time for saying farewell to the gentle and discreet public. Should what I have written find any favour in the eyes of the world of critics and readers, I shall feel myself a happier man than that chaired member, and apply myself, with eager pleasure, to the production of some other work, more worthy, I hope, of their good opinion.

THE END.













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